3 suspected Pentagon gang members killed

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Palace sees new era in RP-US relations

By Carlito Pablo

MOST people mellow with age and former activist Rigoberto Tiglao, now presidential spokesperson, is no exception.

A vociferous opponent of US imperialism in his younger years, Tiglao now sees the dawning of a new era for RP-US relations as a result of Balikatan

PALACE/A14

Long US stay for Erap eyed

Butz Aquino: It'll be good for Gloria

By Juliet L. Javellana, Donna S. Cueto and Norman Bordadora

SENDING ousted President Joseph Estrada abroad for prolonged treatment of his arthritic knees would benefit President Macapagal-Arroyo, an opposition member of the House of Representatives said yesterday.

"She can have relative peace, no irritations. *Parang nabunutan siya ng tinik* (It's like a thorn was removed from her body)," said Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino, one of those circulating a resolution supporting Estrada's request to be allowed to go to the United States for knee surgery.

"If you are going to allow Erap to have his treatment abroad, you must be prepared to grant him a prolonged treatment," Aquino said.

The resolution, signed by 130 House members, was set to be filed last night by its principal author, Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen. Nineteen senators signed a counterpart resolution in the Senate.

But opposition to the twin resolutions in and out of Congress has been growing.

Bayan Muna party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Crispin Beltran and Liza Maza filed a counter-resolution, expressing the sense of the House not to allow Estrada to leave abroad for medical treatment "in the interest of justice and the expeditious resolution of the plunder case" against him.

Ocampo admitted that only the three of them had signed the counter-resolution so far. "We would like to give those who did not sign the (pro-Estrada) resolution a forum," he said.

Outside the House, leaders of three political parties that supported Ms Macapagal during People Power II are also opposing Estrada's request.

Former Cebu Gov. Emilio "Lito" Osmeña of Promdi, Education Secretary Raul Roco of Aksyon Demokratiko and former Defense Secretary Rene de Villa of Reporma said Estrada should not be allowed to travel to the United States because this would send a "signal that justice can be fixed."

"Sending (Estrada) abroad to receive medical services available in the Philippines betrays the rule of law and weakens the constitutional foundations of the

LONG/A15

US SPECIAL Forces commandos survey the badlands from the jungle base of the Philippine 5th Marine Battalion in Upper Majayjay, Maluso, Basilan. The area is a known stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf bandits who, this time, appear to have made themselves very very scarce. VAL HANDUMON.

US soldiers venture near bandits' hideout

MALUSO, Basilan—US Special Forces yesterday ventured to within a few kilometers of a jungle stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf bandits, the target of the RP-US joint military training exercise.

A US Army major and three other American soldiers, accompanied by Filipino military escorts and journalists, traveled to the camp of the 5th Marine Battalion in the hinterlands of Maluso town to survey the area where a small US Special Forces contingent planned to stay.

The Americans rode on two pickup trucks over rough roads through coconut groves, rubber plantations and sparsely populated communities where the bandits used to roam freely before being hammered by a 9-month-old Philippine military offensive.

"This is an outstanding jungle camp," US Army Maj. Mark Gatto said of the tactical command post fortified by dugout bunkers on rolling hills in Upper Majayjay.

While Gatto seemed relaxed, two other US soldiers constantly monitored the surroundings. The US soldiers were not allowed to venture out of the camp.

"That's the Abu Sayyaf's playground," Philippine Marine Maj. Elmer Estillos said, pointing to the jungle-covered Mt. Puno Mahaji that loomed just behind a hill about 10 km away.

Estillos then pointed in a different direction to where the bandits recently beheaded a military guide, underscoring risks that American troops are

US SOLDIERS/A14

VAL HANDUMON

GADGETS galore. T/Sgt. Scott Nowlin checks his location using a Global Positioning System (GPS) device.

Revenge one reason people like US troops

ARMY CPL. Joel Abrenica's war with the Abu Sayyaf is a personal story of love and loss. The arrival of US Special Forces in Basilan makes it a tale of anticipated revenge.

On March 20, 2000, Abrenica's wife-to-be Marissa was kidnapped by the notorious kidnap-for-ransom gang, together with more than 50 children and several fellow teachers.

"Marissa and I were about to be wed," he recalled, when Moro gunmen raided the Claret School of Tumahubong and other schools and snatched the hostages.

As in any true love story, the warrior eventually rescued his damsel in distress. After two months of pursuit and hard-fought skirmishes with the kidnappers, the military finally caught up with Marissa' kidnappers.

In the fateful encounter, most of the hostages walked free, but Claretian priest Fr. Rhoel Gallardo and three others died in the firefight.

"I visited her at the hospital," Abrenica said, but to recover from her ordeal, the traumatized young woman needed to leave the island. She went to live in Manila, and "we lost communication," he recalled.

The star-crossed story of Joel and Marissa is typical of the way the bru-

REVENGE/A14

(Un)covering the Abu Sayyaf

By Noralyn Mustafa
PDI Mindanao Bureau

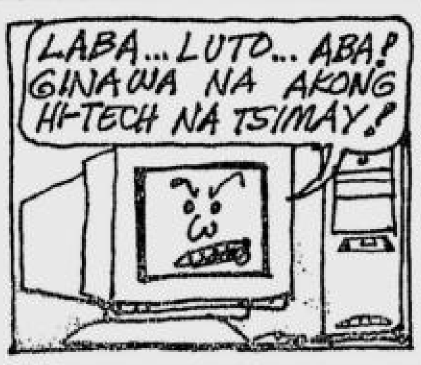
JOLO, Sulu—As soon as it was confirmed that the tourists kidnapped from Sipadan had been taken to Jolo, journalists from various media outfits, both local and foreign, descended on this tiny town to cover the hostage crisis.

And it did not take long for them to realize that they were covering not only the hostage situation but the Abu Sayyaf as well; in fact, there were times when they seemed to be focusing more on the kidnappers than the kidnapped.

This was because even from what little they knew of the ragtag band of self-proclaimed Islamic fighters for independence, this one seemed so unlike any other. And soon enough, even the most seasoned journalists had to admit that covering the Abu Sayyaf was a totally different experience.

For most of them, their first encounter with the dreaded band was on that "historic" first meeting of all the five top "commanders"—Galib

(UN)COVERING/A14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HI-TECH/A15

54 more hospitals under investigation

By Jerry Esplanada

(Second of three parts)

Medicare Fraud
An I-Team *Report*

ON Nov. 22, 2001, an inspection team from the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. paid an unannounced visit to the Januaria Marcial Memorial Hospital in Banga, South Cotabato.

In the 50-bed hospital, the team found more than a hundred pages of fabricated claim forms and other documents with false entries.

"The team made the surprise inspection on Nov. 22 but some of the forms had dates that said Nov. 25. The same forms had been filled up by persons who (had) yet to be confined in the hospital," said lawyer Jay Villegas, head of PhilHealth's Fraud Prevention and Detection Unit.

When the team tried to confiscate the documents, however, hospital officials refused to surrender them. "Instead, they set the forms on fire," Villegas said. "We have video and photos of the incident."

Januaria Marcial is one of many health care providers on the "watchlist" of PhilHealth, the state-run insurance firm administering the National Health Insurance Program for both private- and public-sector

54 MORE/A4

Second FRONT PAGE

MACAKING KIDNAP GANG PALA YAN!

3 Pentagon suspects slain

DAVAO CITY—Police killed three alleged members of the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom gang in Matalam town in North Cotabato on Sunday, only a day after one of the gang's suspected top leaders was arrested in Manila, officials said yesterday.

Three suspected members of the gang—Abdul Rashid, Akmad Masmod and Magdaga Kahil--were killed instantly but two companions escaped in a motorcycle, North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol said.

The five were riding two high-powered motorcycles when they were ordered to stop at a police checkpoint in Barangay West Patadon in Matalam. Instead of stopping, the five engaged the police in a running gunbattle.

Supt. Odelon Ramoneda, North Cotabato police chief, said police were still chasing gang members in the area in the face reports that the gang was planning to abduct some wealthy business people in Kidapawan City and Matalam.

Last Saturday, police arrested Faizal Marohombsar, a suspected top leader of the Pentagon which is on the United States' list of terrorist groups.

Piñol warned Malacañang it was too early to declare a victory against the kidnap gang with the arrest of Marohombsar as his group formed only a small part of the Pentagon.

"The Pentagon gang is bigger than Marohombsar," Piñol said.

He said the "big fish" would be Ustadz Hashim Shamir, a Moro Islamic Liberation Front commander and brother of MILF chair Hashim Salamat.

Piñol claimed that Shamir was the brains of the Pentagon. He said Shamir was in contact with all Pentagon leaders and was responsible for planning kidnap operations.

Piñol said the men who were killed last Sunday were members of a Pentagon sub-group headed by Cabilo Saguile of Pagalungan, Maguindanao.

Saguile's group, based in the Liguasan Marsh in Maguindanao and operating mainly in Cotabato province, was reportedly behind the abduction of Martina Martin in Cotabato City last year.

The governor said that aside from Saguile, the other leaders of other subgroups of the Pentagon were Marohombsar, Tahir Alonto, Mayangkang Saguile, Andy Montawal and Gerry Saligan.

The Marohombsar group operates in Maguindanao and Lanao areas, the Alonto group in South Cotabao and Sultan Kudarat, and Mayangkang Saguile in Pikit, Midsayap, Libungan areas, all in North Cotabato.

Saligan's group had been operating in Davao City and Davao del Sur but was neutralized after 17 of its members, including Saligan, were arrested during the rescue of kidnap victim Maria Cecilia Bonifacio in Hagonoy, Davao del Sur, last month.

Piñol said the group was also responsible for the abduction of Canadian Pierre Belanger.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez ruled out the grant of criminal immunity to Marohombsar amid reports that Marohombsar would be taken in as a state witness and placed under the Witness Protection Program.

"The WPP can't include somebody who is the most guilty or somebody considered to be the leader of a criminal syndicate. Therefore he will be charged and prosecuted," Perez said.

Marohombsar was charged yesterday with illegal possession of firearms at the Manila Prosecutor's Office.

Police had confiscated from him a cal. 45 pistol with two magazines when he was arrested on Saturday in Quiapo. The gun was licensed to a certain SPO4 Tauka Dipatuan of Lanao.

Assistant prosecutor Domingo Orda recommended that bail be set at P80,000 bail.

But Orda said that even if Marohombsar were to post bail, he would still not be released.

Marohambsar, who described himself as a businessman, also faces charges of kidnapping for ransom and serious illegal detention, a nonbailable offense, before the Cagayan de Oro City Regional Trial Court Branch 10.

His arrest on Saturday was based on a warrant issued by the Cagayan de Oro court. ***Anthony S. Allada with reports from Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau, and Philip Tubeza, TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac, Metro Manila***

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Pentagon leader's fall sparks PNP turf war

By TJ Burgonio

THE SO-CALLED turf war between the National Anti-Crime Commission Anti-KFR Task Force and the police appears to have escalated after it was leaked to media that a captured suspected Pentagon gang leader had alleged that National Police Chief Leandro Mendoza and Interior Secretary Jose Lina were involved in kidnapping activities.

A top police official yesterday decried the "smear campaign" against Mendoza and Lina and called for the dismissal of the Naktaf investigator who leaked to the media Faisal Marohombsar's allegations.

"This has caused damage not only to the reputation of Lina and Mendoza but to the very institutions that they represent," Deputy Director General Rex Piad, chief of the PNP directorial staff, told reporters.

"Can you imagine the PNP chief and the Local Government Secretary being accused of kidnapping?" he asked.

President Macapagal-Arroyo herself found the allegations incredulous, saying she believed her own officials' word over that of a kidnap gang leader's.

"I have no reason to believe him (Marohombsar). The fact is he was arrested. If he had the blessings of Lina and Mendoza, he would not have been caught," she said in a chance interview yesterday.

Marohombsar, the alleged negotiator and "brains" of the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom gang who was arrested in Quiapo last Saturday, was quoted as having said during tactical interrogation that his kidnap operations had the blessings of Mendoza and Lina.

Some newspapers reported his allegations, quoting unnamed Naktaf sources.

Mendoza and Lina, however, brushed off the charges.

Piad demanded that the Naktaf chief, Police Deputy Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., order a "full-dress investigation" of the media leak.

"This is the height of irresponsibility on the part of the investigator. Why would you release unverified and unsubstantiated information? We have rules on the release of such information," he said.

"There should be a full-dress investigation and heads should roll. Let those who are responsible be sanctioned," Piad added.

Piad also demanded that Naktaf issue an apology to Mendoza and Lina.

Ebdane demurred, however.

"We never released anything like that. The first thing to do is to ask the reporter concerned. We had prepared a press release which I cleared before it was released," he said.

He said he had given Lina an explanation but admitted that he had not talked to Mendoza.

"I told him (Lina) the circumstances and I told him that we would investigate. I have written a letter to him, copy furnished the PNP chief and the President," Ebdane said.

He declined to say if Marohombsar did made such allegations against Lina and Mendoza.

"That should be asked of Marohombsar," he said.

Marohombsar has been banned from giving interviews for security reasons.

The President herself earlier confirmed that there was a turf war between Naktaf and the police over the handling of kidnap cases, and said guidelines should be drawn up to delineate the functions and areas of jurisdiction of the two agencies. ***With a report from Dona Pazzibugan***

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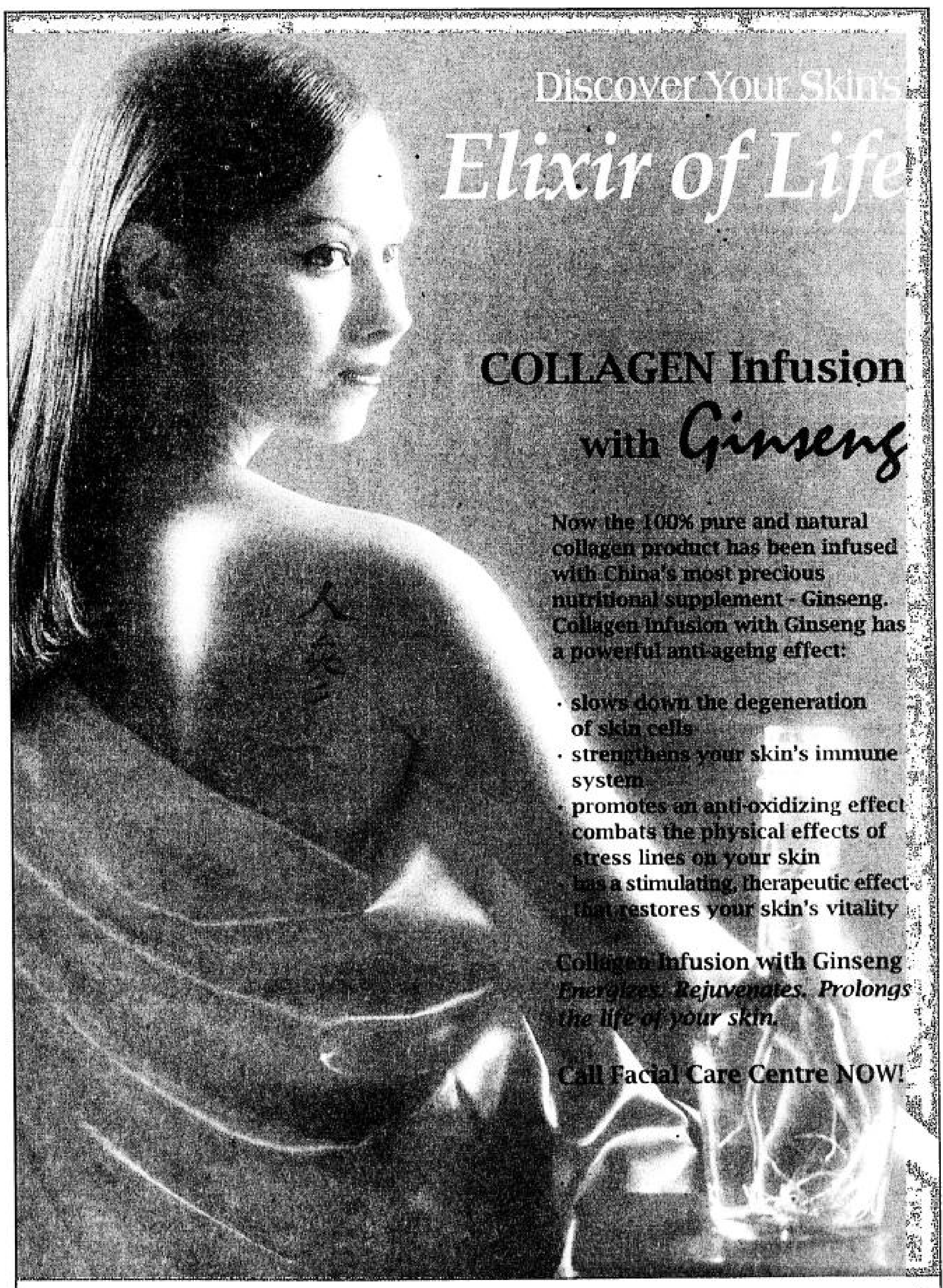

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Gov't to take over Cocobank next week, finally

By Donna S. Cueto

FINALLY, the 15 government nominees to the United Coconut Planters' Bank would be sitting in the UCPB board by early next week as the government formalizes its takeover of the bank earlier declared by the Supreme Court as holding coco levy funds that were apparently public funds.

After this, the five government nominees to the San Miguel Corp. will replace the five nominees of former President Joseph Estrada which the Macapagal administration had been trying to oust since coming to power in January last year. The five new nominees will be in before the Feb. 27 special stockholders' meeting of the SMC on the Kirin deal.

This was announced yesterday by Presidential Commission on Good Government chair Haydee Yorac.

Yorac explained that the 20 or 25 subsidiary firms of UCPB would also be taken over by the government effective next week. The directors of these firms will all be replaced by government nominees.

The PCGG chair declined to identify who the five new SMC nominees were, except to say that she was not among them, having turned down Malacañang's invitation to serve in the board.

"I would rather not sit in the SMC board," Yorac said, explaining that it would potentially be a "conflict-of-interest" case, as she was the PCGG chair.

Yorac said that SMC chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco would continue to "manage" SMC. But the PCGG would also continue to pursue the criminal and civil cases against Cojuangco at the Sandiganbayan.

The PCGG chair said that by Feb. 27, the new government directors would already be sitting in the board and participate in the deliberations on the controversial SMC-Kirin deal. But she said that the deal would no longer be revised and would just be approved.

Kirin will own 15 percent of SMC, and will have two nominees in the board. Cojuangco would have three, and the government is entitled to seven board seats, including the five PCGG nominees who would replace the Estrada nominees headed by former presidential brother-in-law Raul de Guzman.

The PCGG is representing the 27 percent SMC shares held by the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF).

There would also be consultations on the appointment of independent directors in the SMC board. In effect, neither the government nor Cojuangco would have majority control of the corporation, Yorac said.

The SMC upheld in December last year the right of the government, through the PCGG, to vote the sequestered shares of the UCPB.

The UCPB is 94.29 percent sequestered, while the remaining shares are owned by the First United Bank.

Don't waver on RP fruits, Angara urges gov't

By Rocky Nazareno

MALACAÑANG should explore all channels to make Australia allow Philippine pineapples and bananas into that country by June 2002.

Sen. Edgardo Angara said, "Manila should use all available leverage to get the decades-old restriction on our two world-class agricultural exports lifted by Australia."

"The Philippine government should not waver on this issue," Angara said. "A commitment is a commitment."

Angara, who had asked Australia to conduct a risk analysis of Philippine bananas and pineapples when he was agriculture secretary, noted such an analysis would clear the two types of fruits for import into Australia.

Angara made his suggestion in the wake of reports the Department of Foreign Affairs was set to hold bilateral talks with Australia, after Canberra began wavering in its commitment to accept Philippine bananas and pineapples by June.

Angara said the Philippines has some leverage in asking for reciprocal trade from Australia given the latter's "enormous advantage in our bilateral trade."

"The Philippines is the top importer of Australian feeder cattle and dairy and processed agricultural products in massive volumes," Angara said.

Given this disparity, the Philippines could demand that Australia live by its commitment to allow the entry of Philippine pineapples and bananas into that country.

Gloria's fotog in hot water

By Carlito Pablo

THE CHIEF photographer of President Macapagal-Arroyo has been grounded after his subordinates complained of, among other things, being used as pimps during out-of-town travels.

Jerry Carual, chief of the Malacañang photo section, was placed under investigation by a three-member committee created by Press Secretary Noel Cabrera.

Headed by Press Undersecretary Carmen "Ching" Suva, the committee was given a week to review the charges against Carual, who has been Ms Macapagal's photographer since she was still the Vice President.

Carual was also accused of misappropriating official equipment for his personal use; the faking of the President's signature placed on photographs given out to certain Filipino-Chinese businessmen, among others; the faking of press cards; and dropping the name of First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

The charges were contained in a letter to Cabrera signed by his subordinates.

Carual denied all the allegations, which he described as "products of... wild yet fertile imaginations."

"Please be informed that I did not encounter this kind of problem when I was covering all by myself the activities of PGMA (Macapagal) when she was still the VP of the country," Carual said.

Cabrera said over the phone that he expects to institute changes in the photo section after the Suva committee has finished its review of the case.

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MARCOS 'CRONY' CASES

Haydee questions Ani's inaction

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government has questioned Ombudsman Aniano Desierto for not acting on the four forfeiture petitions it had filed in December last year against six Marcos alleged cronies keeping more than $19 million in Swiss deposits since 1986.

In a letter dated Feb. 14, 2002, PCGG chair Haydee Yorac pressed Ombudsman Aniano Desierto to act on the forfeiture petitions against former Energy Secretary Geronimo Velasco, Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez, Carmencita Clavecilla, Alfredo de Borja, Fe Roa Gimenez and Ignacio Gimenez, saying that his inaction would prejudice the PCGG's efforts to immediately recover their alleged ill-gotten wealth.

The office of the Ombudsman received the petitions on Jan. 2, 2002.

"Up to this date, however, and more than one month since the abovementioned filing, no notice or any other document has been received by the Commission indicating any action taken by the Office of the Ombudsman on the petitions," Yorac wrote Desierto.

"Needless to state, any delay in acting on those petitions will prejudice—if it has already not prejudiced—the Republic of the Philippines, particularly its efforts to recover ill-gotten wealth of the respondents deposited in Switzerland and elsewhere," she said.

The PCGG chair, in her previous letter-request to the Ombudsman, had asked Desierto to form a panel of prosecutors from the Department of Justice to conduct the preliminary investigations, similar to the procedure adopted in the forfeiture petition against the Marcoses, or in Civil Case 141.

According to the PCGG, these deposits by the Marcos cronies were supposedly already frozen in 1986, when the Swiss authorities issued a unilateral freeze order on all Marcos-related accounts.

Velasco, former Energy minister during the Marcos administration, supposedly kept at least $14 million in Swiss deposits as of 1986. The Gimenez spouses had $3.2 million, and 3.093 million deutschmarks.

Clavecilla had $250,000 in Swiss deposits at the American Express Bank, which later became the Union Bancaire Privee, her relative, Alfredo de Borja kept at least $961,521.48 also at the same bank.

Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez, brother of former first lady Imelda Marcos, also kept at least $979,000 in Swiss deposits as of 1986, according to the PCGG.

These funds could have more than doubled by now because of interests, reaching $40 million.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Desierto yesterday for his response, but he declined to be interviewed about Yorac's letter.

Customs cracks down on cement smugglers

By Armand N. Nocum

THE BUREAU of Customs has begun cracking down on unscrupulous cement traders who have been depriving the government of millions of pesos in revenues.

Customs investigation showed the traders, who were not identified, pretended to export the cement to other countries in order to avoid paying the "input VAT," as well as availing themselves of discounts for cement sold locally.

Seized from two oceangoing vessels in Cebu and Cagayan de Oro cities on Saturday was some P20 million worth of cement. The ships were the MV Matahari and the MV Superstar I, which were intercepted in Mandaue, Cebu and Gingoog City, respectively.

Despite the lack of clearances from the customs bureau allowing the ships to sail, they went ahead and left port anyway until they were intercepted.

"After our successful campaign against rice smugglers, we are turning our attention on those behind the technical smuggling of cement," Cebu district collector John Tan told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Tan said the cement was ordered seized by Cagayan de Oro district port collector Marietta Zamoranos, after it was discovered the merchandise was not actually being exported to Indonesia but was being sold in this country to avoid payment of the value-added tax (VAT).

In addition, cement sold locally is given a discount of $10 per metric ton or P25 per sack, a hefty amount that reverts to its owner, it was learned.

In a report to Customs Commissioner Titus Villanueva, Zamoranos said the Matahari was carrying 87,000 bags of cement, while the Superstar held 48,000 sacks.

Advice to Mikey, Angela

By Carlito Pablo

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is advising her son Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo and fiancee Angela Montenegro to undergo pre-marriage counseling before their wedding on June 24.

"Before anything else, start right," President Macapagal said.

Ms Macapagal said she told them to see the parish priest of the La Vista subdivision in Quezon, where the Arroyo family has long maintained a residence.

The President said the subdivision's parish priest is an expert marriage counselor.

"I hope they take my advice," she said.

President Macapagal revealed that she made such a suggestion to the couple when reporters asked her what she can say about the breakup of the marriage of Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez and actress Alma Moreno.

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54 more hospitals . . .

(From page 1)

employees. On Dec. 23, PhilHealth suspended the hospital's accreditation. (The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Dr. Elizabeth Bayuga, the hospital's medical director, for comment.)

The FPDU is now preparing charges of fabrication or possession of fabricated forms and supporting documents, among other violations of the National Health Insurance Act of 1995, against the hospital.

Similar charges are being readied against Leona Lim Memorial Hospital, in Valencia, Bohol. A PhilHealth team which visited the 70-bed health care establishment early this month found more than 1,000 pages of allegedly fabricated forms and supporting documents with false entries, Villegas told the I-Team. Contacted by telephone, hospital administrator Jorge Buslon declined to comment on PhilHealth's findings.

Aside from so-called ghost patients, PhilHealth loses hundreds of millions in fraudulent claims a year through the fabrication of claim forms and supporting documents, the needless extension of the period of hospital confinement, the deliberate post-dating of claims and the filing of double or multiple claims.

Prolonged stay

Hospitals artificially extend the period of a patient's confinement. They do it by continuing to write entries in the doctor's order, nurse's notes and observation charts despite the actual discharge or the absence of a given patient.

The following 19 hospitals are being investigated by PhilHealth for allegedly extending the confinement period of patients: Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center in San Fernando City, La Union; Gov. Roque Ablan Sr. Memorial Hospital in Laoag City; Peneyra Clinic and Hospital in Lal-lo, Cagayan; Dr. Ester Garcia General Hospital in Cauayan, Isabela; Primo Gaffud District Hospital in Echague, Isabela.

Malolos San Vicente Hospital in Malolos, Bulacan; San Juan District Hospital in San Juan, Batangas; Ma. Estrella General Hospital in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro; Camarines Norte General Hospital in Daet, Camarines Norte; Antipolo District Hospital in Antipolo City; and the AFP Medical Center, Philippine National Police Hospital, St. Luke's Medical Center.

Philippine Orthopedic Hospital, UST Hospital, Olivarez General Hospital, Christ the King Maternity and Lying-In Hospital, St. Victoria Hospital, and Manila Doctors Hospital, all in Metro Manila.

Leo Tubaña, administrator of the 25-bed Primo Gaffud District Hospital in Echague, Isabela, denied the charge. "In this government hospital we serve the people with sincerity and dedication. We don't resort to fraudulent activities," Tubaña said.

Hospitals also include post-dating of claims, where "again for the purpose of claiming payment, a hospital files a claim for payment of services rendered not within 60 days from the date of discharge of the patient. They do it by altering dates just to conform (with) the 60-day prescriptive period," Villegas said.

"Hospitals who furnish false information or (are) found preparing claims with false entries or refuse to give benefits due to a PhilHealth member, as well as those who charge patients for medicines or services which are legally chargeable to and covered by the program, are also liable to various penalties," Villegas added.

Multiple claims

PhilHealth records show that at least 33 hospitals nationwide are being investigated for allegedly filing double or multiple claims.

In Metro Manila, the list includes the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City, which faces nine administrative cases. But "there was no intention to cheat (PhilHealth)," Heart Center director Ludgerio Torres explained. "It must have been clerical errors committed by our billing people. I've forwarded the cases to our lawyer."

Four cases are pending against the Makati Medical Center, and the respective hearings are ongoing, said Vita Guinto, Medicare head of the prestigious 600-bed hospital.

Guinto also blamed "clerical errors" for the trouble the hospital was in. She said it was "unthinkable for a hospital like Makati Med, one which advances millions of pesos in Medicare claims, to resort to fraudulent claims just to make some money."

"Our office makes sure no irregularities are committed in the filing of Medicare claims. But sometimes clerical mistakes are committed along the way," Guinto told the INQUIRER.

Also charged with four counts of multiple filing of claims is the De Los Santos Medical Center in Quezon City.

Other hospitals charged with multiple claims include Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center and University of Perpetual Help-Rizal Medical Center (three counts each); University of Sto. Tomas Hospital, University of the East-Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center, Mary Johnston Hospital, Ospital ng Maynila Medical Center, Unciano General Hospital, and Dr. Jesus Delgado Memorial Hospital (two counts each).

Medical City, Cardinal Santos Medical Center, East Avenue Medical Center, Fort Bonifacio General Hospital, Family Clinic, Children's Medical Center and General Hospital, National Kidney and Transplant Institute, John F. Cotton Hospital, St. Jude General Hospital, FEU-Dr. Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation, and Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital (one count each).

Also facing similar charges are the Ifugao Provincial Hospital in the Cordillera Administrative Region; Central Luzon District Hospital in San Vicente, Tarlac; Tiong Bi Hospital in Bacolod City; Angel Salazar Memorial General Hospital in San Jose, Antique; and the Zamboanga Doctors Hospital in Zamboanga City.

Sr. Normita Guevara, administrator of the Daughters of Charity-run Mother Seton Hospital in Naga City, said the hospital had already settled the double claims case filed against the 100-bed hospital by PhilHealth, but records of the firm's head office in Pasig City said otherwise.

"It wasn't a fraudulent claim. There's a simple clerical error in the claims form," Guevara added.

PhilHealth had earlier meted a three-month suspension on the B.A. Hospital Inc. in Meycauayan, Bulacan, for filing double claims.

A hospital representative admitted the error, saying they were "not properly informed that double filing is no longer allowed." B.A. Hospital lawyer Bonifacio Tavera Jr. apologized for his client's "ignorance."

Several hospitals nationwide have also been charged by PhilHealth with padding of Medicare claims. They include the Calamba Doctors Hospital in Parian, Calamba, Laguna, Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center in Manila; Holy Infant Clinic in Tuguegarao City; Nueva Ecija Good Samaritan General Hospital in Cabanatuan City; G. Gonzales Medical Clinic in Tiwi, Albay; Zamboanga Doctors Hospital in Zamboanga City; Pagadian Community Hospital in Pagadian City; San Pedro Hospital of Davao City; and the Samal District Hospital in Samal, Davao del Norte.

Money motive

Why do some hospitals resort to fraudulent claims?

PhilHealth insiders blamed "criminal minds and the *palusot* or short-cut mentality of some hospital owners and doctors."

Lawyer Valentin Guanio, head of PhilHealth's legal services group, said "maybe all of the above. But it's obvious, it's money they are after."

"There are doctors with criminal minds," said Dr. Bu Castro, secretary general of the 50,000-member Philippine Medical Association. "There are also doctors who are material gains-oriented, short of saying *mukhang pera*. And because of their primary concern which is money, they resort to fraudulent activities.

"These things really happen. In every organization, there is always a bad egg and the PMA is no exception. Here, we won't think twice about expelling bad eggs from the PMA. That's the most we can do. We're protecting the profession."

The PMA, he said, is "aware of PhilHealth's charges against some of its members. Some of them are valid and we don't tolerate fraudulent activities."

"Fraud cuts across any profession, whether they are lawyers, engineers or doctors," noted Dr. Francisco Duque III, PhilHealth president and CEO. "I suppose in any profession there are snakes in the grass."

SC tackles reopening of Kuratong 'rubout' case today

By M. Ubac

THE SUPREME Court will finally tackle the legal questions surrounding the dismissal of the 1995 Kuratong Baleleng cases in a full court session today.

Starting at 10 a.m., all 15 justices will hear the oral arguments for or against the reopening of the case involving the alleged rubout of 11 Kuratong Baleleng gang members.

The decision to hear oral arguments of the controversies hounding the Kuratong Baleleng came more than five months after the government, through Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo, filed a petition for review and certiorari with the high court.

The government filed the petition to question the permanent injunction ordered last year by the Court of Appeals on the revival and reinvestigation of the cases involving Sen. Panfilo Lacson and his top aides, Sr. Superintendents Michael Ray Aquino and Cesar Mancao.

The high court allows oral arguments in order to hear the discussion of both parties. After an oral argument, the tribunal will reconvene and deliberate before finally handing down a ruling.

Marcelo, with the aid of justice officials led by Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, will argue for the government's position to revive the cases. While lawyer Philip Sigfrid Fortun will led counsels for Lacson in his plea for a status quo of the CA ruling.

Perez told reporters yesterday he would not argue for the government, saying "it is the task of the Solgen."

He, however, stressed that he would help in "whatever capacity."

Perez said the government's petition was anchored on the fact that the accused were not arraigned in the regional trial court, which handled the cases, and thus double jeopardy could not apply on them even if the government revived the cases.

He said Marcelo would also invoke that substantive law prevails over procedural law. "Under substantive law, the prescriptive period for the filing of the case is 20 years; so it has not elapsed. We believe that the prosecution of the KB accused may continue and should continue."

Before the oral argument starts, the full court will announce whether Justice Antonio Carpio will inhibit from the deliberations.

Lacson, in a motion on Feb. 12, asked Carpio to inhibit from the deliberations on the Kuratong cases.

Lacson said Carpio had shown bias and partiality against him when he was still columnist of the INQUIRER last year.

In its petition, the government is asking the high court to reverse a ruling of the Court of Appeals, which issued on Aug. 24 a permanent injunction on the 11 murder cases filed against Lacson and 36 others in connection with the alleged summary execution of 11 Kuratong Baleleng members.

The CA Special Third Division, in a decision penned by Associate Justice Eriberto Rosario Jr. and concurred in by Associate Justices Conrado Vasquez Jr., Hilarion Aquino and Josefina Guevarra-Salonga, handed down a ruling favorable to Lacson.

The four associate justices issued a permanent injunction and declared as null and void the preliminary investigation conducted by the Department of Justice (DOJ) on the cases and the corresponding complaints filed with the QC court.

Marcelo claimed that the permanent injunction on reviving the cases was unlawful.

He said the CA and Quezon City Judge Agnir, who earlier dismissed the cases, committed a grave error.

Marcelo cited three grounds in asking for a reversal of the CA ruling.

First, Marcelo said Lacson himself did not invoke the two-year prescriptive period for reviving the case (Section 8, Rule 117, of the Revised Rules of Criminal Procedures). However, the provision was used by the appellate court in dismissing the cases and barring further investigations and trial on the matter.

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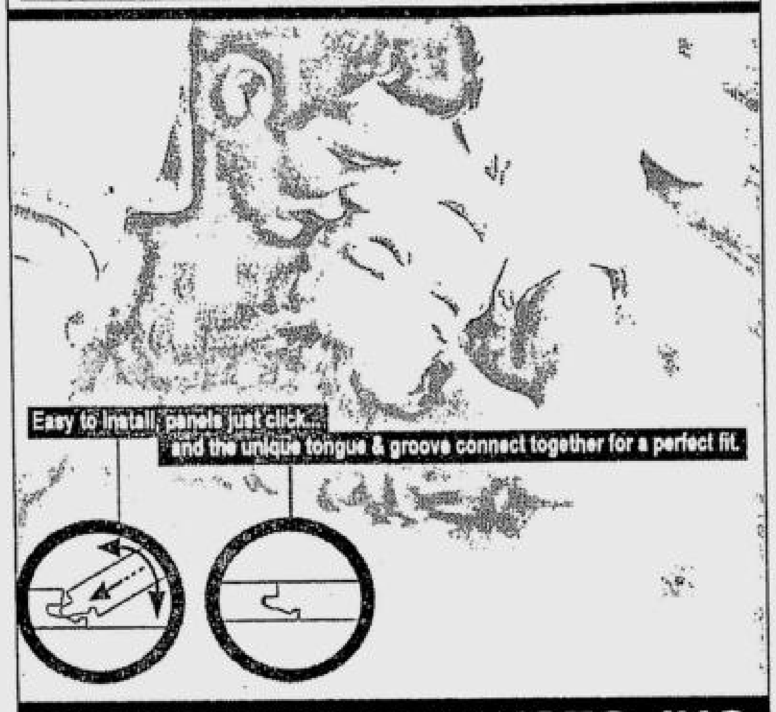
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EDITORIALS

Sex

A DAY after Valentine's Day, a New York-datelined story asked why sex is so popular. It said that scientists are looking at the fact that in the cold light of biology, sex is a pretty inefficient way to reproduce.

Sex can be very expensive. Lord Chesterfield is supposed to have said of sex: "The position is ridiculous, the pleasure momentary and the expense damnable!"

Say all the bad things you will about sex, it's still a popular way of reproduction. Look at what it has produced: 6 billion people, and counting. It is popular because it is pleasurable. We hate to think of the time when, like the lovers in the movie "Barbarella," people would be having sex by touching one another's fingers.

Sex and the sexual instinct have so far done a good job of improving not just the human race but all species. Scientists say that sex helps to get rid of harmful mutated genes and helps the population take advantage of beneficial mutations. Somehow, Nature works out for the good of everybody. Schopenhauer said that men desire women with ample bosoms apparently because of sexual attraction, but subliminally they do so because they would like to assure their offspring of a good supply of milk.

Do away with sex? Never. We're not British. We're Filipinos who enjoy sex—enjoy it so much that our country is bursting at the seams with people. Meanwhile, hurray for sex and love! As the French would say, "*Vive la différence*!"

Song

Round, like a circle in a spiral,
Like a wheel within a wheel…

WHO does not know these lyrics, the music to which they were set, and the composer of the song? Unless one has not been listening to pop music the past 30 or 40 years, he or she would not know that the lines come from the song "Windmills of Your Mind" by Michel Legrand.

On Valentine's Day last week, Kuh Ledesma teased Legrand when he asked if the audience knew one of his songs that they were about to sing, and said, "No." But she quickly took back her answer and said, "Of course, Mr. Legrand, we all know your songs."

And so they proceeded to sing, and for about two hours, the hundreds in the audience were transported to the land of nostalgia and sentimentality. Kuh brought many listeners close to tears with an emotional and moving interpretation of "I'll Wait for You," the hit song from the tearjerker "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg." (*If it takes forever, I will wait for you, For a thousand summers, I will wait for you…*)

The versatile Legrand, now pushing 70, made the audience forget his age as they listened to his wonderful music. Bituin Escalante, a rising star in the music firmament, provided a change of pace by singing some of the jazzy Legrand compositions.

Kuh sang "The Windmills of Your Mind" from the movie "The Thomas Crown Affair," but it was only when Legrand sang the French version that we learned that it told of the "windmills of my heart" (*les moulins de mon coeur*).

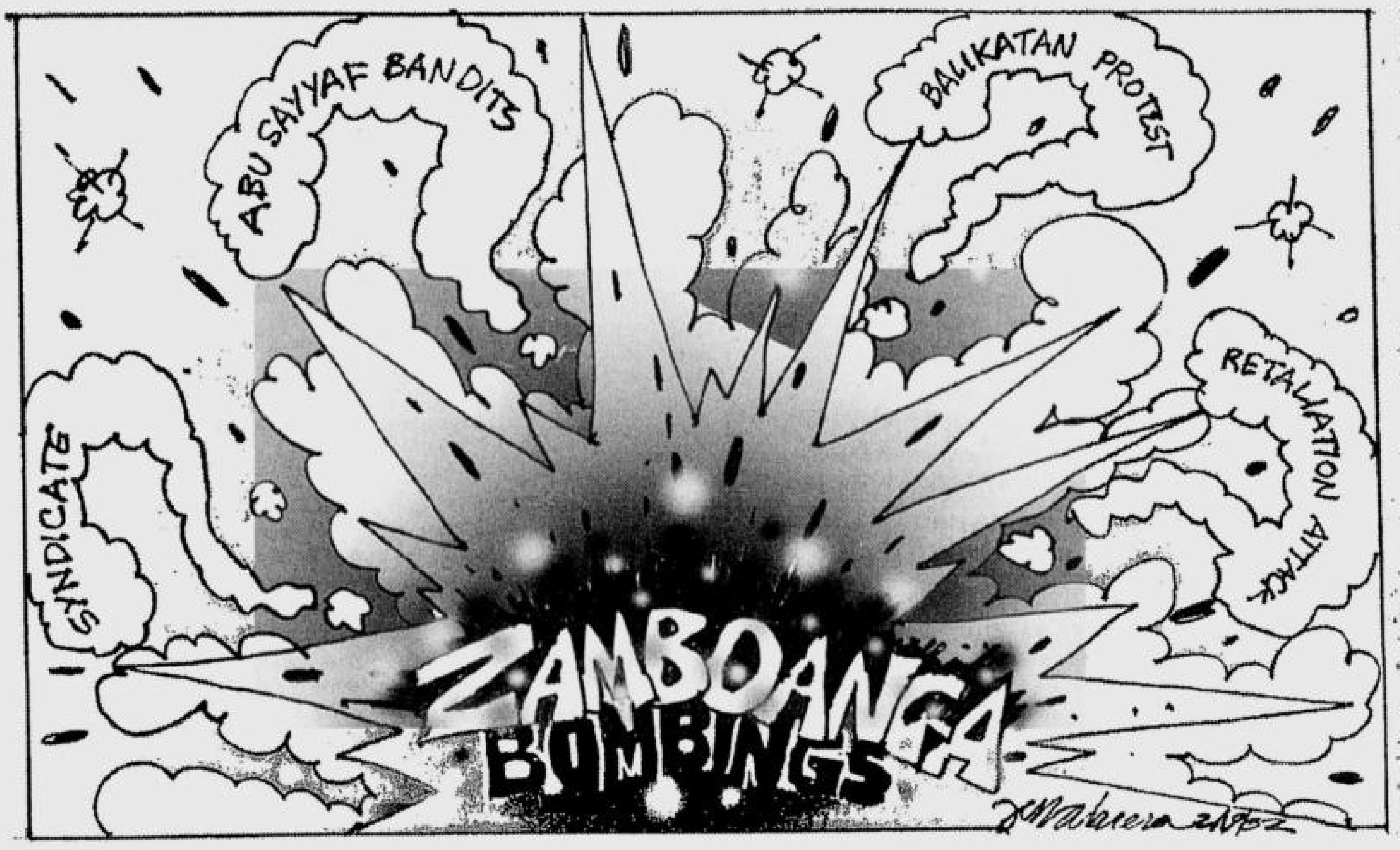
There was the magical "Summer Me, Winter Me," sung especially for lovers on that day of hearts. *(Summer me, winter me/And with your kisses/Morning me, evening me…)* And bringing the show to a close was "The Summer Knows," the theme song of "Summer of '42" whose music score won an Oscar for Legrand.

In 1998, Legrand said in an interview that "the only thing I wanted to do in life was music." And so, beginning at the age of 10, he enlisted in every class of instrument—trumpet, trombone, violin, cello and harp. Later, when the members of an orchestra would say that it was impossible to play what he had written, he would say, "Let me show you." He was fortunate to work with the greatest music teacher ever, Nadia Boulanger. And in her class, he said, he learned not only music, but life, philosophy, literature, painting—"every possible art." The influence shows in his compositions.

Legrand said that he doesn't "write at the piano" like most composers. "I write in silence at the table. With an instrument you only have 10 fingers, but in your imagination you have infinity," he said. "I hear the music in the silence." How very Zen.

The Legrand concert provided a welcome respite from the daily aggravations of urban life. Hundreds of fortunate listeners experienced the infinity of Legrand's music during the concerts on Feb. 14 and 15, and became emotionally and psychically the richer for it.

"Like a circle in a spiral/ Like a wheel within a wheel/ Never ending or beginning, On an ever spinning wheel…"



Another overprice in Agus 1 plant rehab project

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

ANY TIME this week, a committee headed by Trade Secretary Mar Roxas will award the contract to reopen the National Steel Corp. to one of three contenders. The committee shouldn't award the contract to any group without doing a background check.

One of the contenders is Voest Alpine of Austria. It is the same company that successfully negotiated for the construction of the Agus 1 hydroelectric project in Mindanao. But when the Muslims started shooting at the Austrian executives, the corporation packed its bags and ran away from the project site.

Voest Alpine tried to finish the project via remote control from Cebu through a technical assistance agreement. This was not the intention of the main contract. Agus 1 was finished—not by the Austrian contractor, but by the brave engineers of the National Power Corp. who, despite the threat to their lives, did not run away.

The contract was signed in 1976 but the project was not finished until 1990. Although the construction was delayed and not finished by Voest Alpine, the Napocor paid it in full, including additional payment for "contingencies," change orders and time extensions.

As if this was not enough, the Austrian company still wants up to this time, to be paid by the Napocor Euro 8 million even if past Napocor presidents have already disapproved the claim, saying it "is without basis."

But Voest Alpine has not given up. It has proposed another negotiated contract to rehabilitate the Agus 1 plant, and the unpaid claim is hidden in the price.

In a letter to Harald Tomintz, country manager of Voest Alpine, Andreas Starzer of the Commercial Project Management of VA Tech Hydro, wrote that "a 'satisfactory contract' for the Agus 1 rehab must provide an additional margin of app. 0.8 Mio, US$." In other words, the new negotiated contract would be overpriced by $.8 million.

In the first place, why is the rehabilitation of the Agus 1 hydro plant being done not through a transparent public bidding but through a negotiated contract with a company whose record in the first contract was far from satisfactory? Are Napocor officials involved in this "*lutong makaw*" contract? Now that the ombudsman is no longer harassed by any impeachment complaint, he should look into this budding scam.

The rehabilitation of Agus 1 should go through a stringent bidding process. After all, we are no longer in a hurry as we have an excess of generated power.

And come to think of it, if the rehabilitation of National Steel Corp., is awarded to Voest Alpine, what guarantee do we have that its Austrian engineers will not do a disappearing act again when Muslim rebels or bandits start shooting?

The Roxas committee should look at the National Steel's rehab in this light:

- Filipinos have the know-how in steelmaking. Ask the employees of National Steel.
- There are domestic steel companies that can finance NSC's rehabilitation with a little help from the government, much less than the help our government is willing to extend to foreigners.
- There is nothing special about selling the finished products in the world market. Filipinos are first-rate salesmen. Do we need a foreign middleman for this? Besides, domestic demand will probably gobble up all or most of NSC's produce.
- If the foreigners are only interested in selling their products to us, let us see for how much.

* * *

Here is a related issue, and it is the misuse and abuse of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) funds. While these funds are grants from foreign countries, they still have to be paid for by Filipinos taxpayers. They require counterpart funds from the Philippine government.

For example, the bridge program. A big ODA fund was made available to the Department of Interior and Local Government. An Austrian company, which reportedly has financial problems, got the project without any public bidding. The ODA grant needs a counterpart fund from the local government. The main concern of the Austrian supplier is to deliver the steel needed for the upper structure of the bridge. The substructure is the responsibility of the local government.

But we already have so many depots in the country overflowing with delivered steel materials which cannot be used because there is scant counterpart funds.

And look at this finished bridge built with ODA funds in a barangay in Bulacan. It is a wide two-lane, first-class bridge on a one-lane road. A Filipino engineer visited it and stayed there for hours. During that time, only carabaos used it, except for one small jeep.

Had a smaller bridge been built there, the foundation cost would have been less, meaning less drain on scarce counterpart funds. Thus, more bridges could have been built in other locations.

Where is it?

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

MY heart goes out to Plunderwatch. Erap's proposed knee treatment abroad, the group says, "is really just a pretext. If he needs prolonged treatment, it will lead to exile." The lawmakers who figured in Edsa II but who have signed resolutions to allow Erap to seek medical attention abroad, it says, are "political opportunists."

That's right of course. But like most groups, and people, who are right in this country, nobody is listening to them. They're the modern-day Cassandras who are doomed to foretell the truth but to have no one believe them—until it's too late. I've always thought the anti-corruption organizations were just like the human rights ones. You will not find anyone disagreeing with them. You will even find most everyone saying their cause is noble and should be pursued with vigor. Yet no one really takes notice when they do. The silence is deafening. Nowhere in this country in fact will you find such an awesome divide between the acceptance of a principle and the indifference to its application than in the case of human rights and fighting corruption.

Expedience has a way of crowding them out. Crime rages, and human rights are thrown overboard like unnecessary baggage. Prosecuting the corrupt becomes politically untenable, and it is swiftly abandoned in favor of "pragmatic solutions."

The second is obviously the case with Erap. The present administration, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo included—it's her personal doctor who has recommended Erap's treatment abroad—prefers that he leave discreetly rather than cause trouble with his prosecution. Hence, exile.

Well, government officials may naturally be expected to look after their own hide. But the wonder of it is that the public goes along with it. In other parts of the world—and not all of them are in the West, some of them are in Asia—something like this would be greeted with howls of protest. Certainly, it would be so in Japan and South Korea, which argues very forcefully for the direct relationship between culture and progress. The idea that a public official who spirited away a good deal of the nation's very scant and precious resources would be free to live the rest of his days in comfort would be enough to drive people to the streets.

It was the same thing with Aniano Desierto, whom the House, acting like a Mafia, let him off the hook without a thought. Oscar Moreno had taken up the cudgels for Ernesto Francisco, the lawyer who offered evidence that Desierto had taken a bribe from banker Luke Roxas, and offered new evidence that he had deliberately bungled his cases, chief of them the one against the Chingkoes. Moreno subsequently filed impeachment charges against the ombudsman in the House. Desierto's allies—or clients?—rejected it outright, ruling Moreno's case had no substance, as though they would recognize substance if it fell on their heads from the sky.

Again, you can understand that public officials would look after their own hide. Many of them probably owed Desierto a turn, many others probably wanted a future free from his unwanted attentions. But the wonder of it too is that the public has gone along with it. The one person in this country tasked to bring honesty into government is accused, and quite credibly so, with being more crooked than the road to perdition, and the public attitude is "So what?" The same person wriggles away from it with the collusion of the congressmen, and the public attitude to it is "So long."

Indeed, the public hasn't just met all this with indifference, it has greeted it with approval. Congress, I've heard people say, has better things to do than spend its time holding hearings on corruption, or debating impeachment. Well, let us grant that the alternative uses of the congressmen's time are important—which takes a lot of granting when you see how many of them are absent every day, and how some are present only because they have someone sign the attendance sheet for them, or they themselves sign it and leave promptly afterward. But what on earth could be more important than making sure monumental contradiction-in-terms like a corrupt ombudsman, or like criminally minded law enforcers, do not come to typify our public office? What could be more important than restoring some degree of moral standards—never mind high moral standards—to government service?

I've seen some of the studies on corruption, and the recommendations on how to curb it. But I haven't seen them seize on the one thing that has made corruption seize this country by the throat. Which is the public's participation in it by indifference to, or resignation to, or acceptance, or even approval of it.

In the end, there's only one thing that can stop corruption.

It is not electing honest officials to office. The very nature of elections, where candidates are driven to spend hundreds of millions of pesos—and, indeed, where the voters **demand** that they do, voting only for those that donate something to their barangay—are an invitation to corruption. It is not putting up more and more watchdogs, or another ombudsman to watch the ombudsman. That only adds a new layer to the bureaucracy, which means, ipso facto, another office to add to PlunderWatch's list. It is not adding plunder to the list of heinous crimes, or inventing harsher and harsher punishments for crooked public officials. Harsh punishment means nothing to people who are not caught.

It is public outrage. It is the public being roused to fits of expostulation by the odiousness of it all. It is the public being stoked to fury by the obscenity of it all. It is the public being driven to the streets, *sobra na, tama na, itigil na*, by the oppressiveness of it all.

But there's the very big rub. Where is it?

Who'll succeed Villanueva as AFP chief?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

LAST Sunday's homecoming at the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio City was, as always, a mixture of fun, pathos, sentiment and tradition. The blue-and-beige-suited ladies of Class '77, this year's silver jubilarians, provided an over-generous dose of good old cheering as the various alumni classes paraded in their chosen garb. The alumni and their families enjoyed watching AFP skydivers drop from the sky and reserved their lustiest cheers for those who managed to land on the parade ground on their feet despite their speed and heavy load. Also cheered was class '38's retired Col. Pedro Gonzales, the first AFP intelligence chief, who at age 88 is the oldest living alumnus. Despite his heart condition the white-haired Gonzales gallantly trooped the colors with the alumni top brass, holding on to the arm of Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes (class '66). As per tradition, sitting opposite the oldest alumnus on stage was the youngest, 21-year-old 2nd Lt. Ray Delima of class 2001.

* * *

The guest of honor, Reyes, injected a lot of humor into his speech as he teased the various classes on their class mottos. Because the surviving members of classes '51 to '54, the first postwar PMA classes, were already very few in number, noted Reyes, they now proudly remind the alumni that they were "The First Four," while classes '55 to '59 call themselves "The Best Five" of the '50s. Toasting the academy as the "factory for future leaders," he stressed that the true test of PMAyers' formation comes after graduation, when they leave the protective walls of their alma mater and shed off the dress whites for the combat fatigues of the "real world out there." Sadly, however, said Reyes, two young classmates from PMA's class 2000 recently realized all too soon the harshness of the "real world": 2nd Lt. Gene Kenneth Bulong, 22, of the Army's 11th Company died after his jeep was hit by the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan, while 2nd Lt. Raymond Arnaiz Hernandez was killed in Patikul, Sulu, nine days ago. The DND chief related that Hernandez, speaking earlier to his mother about his Sulu assignment, said: "*Masarap palang magsilbi sa bayan kahit maliit ang sweldo.*"

* * *

The buzz at the homecoming involved looming changes in the AFP command due to the retirement of some top brass. At the moment, the AFP leadership is in the hands of Chief of Staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva of class '68, but the three major service commands are in the hands of class '69: Army Chief Jaime de los Santos, Air Force Chief Benjamin Defensor and Navy Flag Officer in Command Vic Hinco (a reserve who was adopted as an honorary member of '69). Also belonging to class '69 are AFP Vice Chief of Staff Gregorio Camiling and PNP Director General Leandro Mendoza.

There's bound to be some major movements when Villanueva retires this May. Who will succeed him? In the past, the Army chief's post has been a springboard to the top, but De los Santos, who served as UN forces commander in East Timor, will retire in April (a strong contender for the Army post is Deputy Chief of Staff Narciso Abaya, West Point '71, who saw action in Basilan last year). Two officers are said to be vying for the top post: Camiling, who retires in November 2003, and Southern Command Chief Roy Cimatu of class '70 who's very much in the limelight these days due to the war in the South. Cimatu's chances would depend very much on how the Basilan crisis is resolved, though a complication is his retirement this July. There could be an awkward situation, Camiling, himself a former SouthCom chief, is senior to him and will retire in November 2003 yet.

* * *

If Cimatu gets appointed as chief of staff, the question of extending his tenure beyond July could come up, but extensions are always unpopular. Look at the discontent stirred up by Mendoza's extension (PMA alumni rib him a lot about his "pregnancy"). I still don't know if a bill that's supposedly being rushed in Congress, seeking to extend the compulsory retirement age of military and police officers from 56 to 58, is intended to accommodate Cimatu. Said to be authored by House defense committee chair Rep. Prospero Pichay, the bill has gone through the mill very quietly, and I myself don't recall any public hearings being called on this sensitive issue.

* * *

A few months back, ace photojournalist Mandy Navasero got involved with the case of 15-year-old Jon Jon Gutierrez, after Makati civic leader Melon Silverio told her of the case. The boy, who comes from the depressed side of Makati, was diagnosed to have "sub-acute sclerosing panencephalitis" (SSPE). It's a relatively unknown disease here that afflicts mainly young children especially from depressed areas, as a late complication of the common measles. In its advanced stage SSPE results in very serious degeneration of the nervous system that could lead to one's being a vegetable or even death. Jon Jon's case revealed that there are many others suffering from the disease around the country, judging from the many letters Mandy received after her article came out in this paper. Mandy began researching on it in between her job as photojournalist, working in consultation with PGH doctors who were treating Jon Jon and other patients. She learned that the disease can be prevented if babies are vaccinated for measles, and that its treatment, using very expensive Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIG), is most effective only in the very early stages. Mandy decided, out of the goodness of her heart, to found the SSPE Children's Care Foundation Inc., in which she invited this columnist and a couple of others to be involved.

(To be continued.)

The American elephant

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ONE of my children's favorite storybooks was "But No Elephants!" It tells the story of an old woman holed up in her tiny house one winter who's visited by a persistent pet salesman. The roads are getting buried under deep piles of snow, but he still has a carful of pets to sell, the salesman begs the old lady. Reluctantly, she agrees to take the canary, but warns him: "But no elephants!" The next day, the salesman shows up again, offering a cat. In quick succession the old woman ends up taking a dog, a goldfish and a duck, warning the salesman each time: "But no elephants!"

The winter has deepened and still the salesman has yet to dispose of the elephant. One night, he deposits the elephant in the old woman's front yard. When she gets up the next morning, the old woman finds the big gray creature parked on her front lawn. She plays deaf to the elephant's entreaties, and tries to ignore his vigorous shivering as flurries bury him in snow up to his ears.

Feeling sorry for their friend, the other animals plead on the elephant's behalf, and reluctantly, the old woman allows the behemoth to poke his head through the front door. But this still isn't enough, and the next day and the next, the elephant is allowed to thrust first two legs, then the other two legs into the warm house.

Alas, an elephant in the living room is too much for the little house to bear. The old woman discovers that by accommodating the elephant into her home, she and the other animals have lost their only protection against the winter cold.

* * *

THEY'RE not yet in our living room, Zamboanga and Basilan being more the backyard of our national home. But by sheer presence and size, the Americans might well be an elephant thrusting its trunk through the back door. And the trouble with letting an elephant in, even if only for "training exercises," is that eventually it'll end up parking its ass in the living room, impossible to ignore, and eventually blocking the residents' view of everything else.

"Don't worry, once the Abu Sayyaf are tracked down and eliminated, the Americans will pull out," a lawyer assured me last week. The trouble with this scenario, I replied, is that history is replete with examples of American "limited engagements" that somehow end up being open-ended arrangements.

We don't need to look any further than our own history. The Battle of Manila Bay started out as a tit-for-tat action for the bombing of the battleship Maine in Cuba, then escalated into full-scale colonization that lasted almost half a century. And even after we had supposedly gained formal independence, the great big elephant remained firmly planted in our living room, strutting its stuff in Clark, Subic and other installations, a central figure that influenced everything from economic to foreign policy to the ideology and rhetoric of protesters young and old.

* * *

EVERYWHERE the American elephant planted its behind, the reluctant hosts have had a hell of a time asking it to leave.

Post World War II, both defeated enemies and victorious allies had no choice but to accept the presence of American troops in their borders. Harry Truman's "police action" in Korea skittered close to World War III before ending up in a stalemate that eventually sundered the country into North and South, and resulted in the setting up of an American military base right in the center of Seoul.

US presence in Vietnam, if you will remember, began with a handful of "advisers" who were supposed to "advise" on such harmless, motherhood concerns as rural development and poverty alleviation. But the advisers were soon followed by more and more troops, and the focus shifted from winning the hearts and minds of the "good" non-Communist Vietnamese people to defeating the big bad Vietcong and all their friends in the region. Somewhere in that scenario also evolved the idea of turning Vietnam into a wasteland, denuding its forests with Agent Orange and ruining its cities with carpet bombing. The only reason the American elephant left Vietnam is that it lost the war, though today it has sent in fresh new troops in the form of businessmen and nostalgic veterans.

Yes, everywhere the Americans have parked, they have proven incredibly difficult to get rid of. Why, even Cuba, the last bastion of Communism in the world, has found it impossible to nudge them out, even if the Yanks have kept but a toehold on the tip of the island in Guantamo, now host to Taliban and al-Qaida prisoners.

* * *

ACTUALLY, the elephant story has a happy ending. Seeing the old lady in tears, the elephant takes pity on her and his other housemates and starts walking south, the little house and all its occupants riding on his back, until he reaches the coast of Florida. There they remain, basking in the sunshine and balmy weather.

We don't know if the American elephant will end up filling our national home with its undeniable presence. We don't know if the training exercises will evolve into a far-reaching, permanent presence. But we've seen it happen before, and it may be the benefit of hindsight, and not any lack of patriotism or excessive and misguided love for the Abu Sayyaf, that has galvanized the opposition to their presence.

One thing we know for sure, we can't sit around and wait for the elephant to get on its feet and bring us to where we want to go. That we'll have to do ourselves.

Sister Melania's story (2)

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L.Harper

(FOLLOWING is the continuation of the nun's story which I started to reproduce last Saturday.)

"We lived in a house where everything was within walking distance from us: the church, the market, grocery store, movie house, beauty parlor, bus terminal, drugstore, schools, etc. The day after my foot became straight, my mother purposely brought me with her to the market and wherever she went. She had never done this before because she wanted to spare me the pain of stepping on sharp small stones. If ever I walked, I would chose that part of the path that was carpeted with thick grass.

"Many who had seen me with my club foot before approached my mother to ask how I had been cured. And when we arrived home our house was full of people eager to see me and talk to my mother. I myself did not know that I was the main purpose for their visit and that something unusual had happened to me in answer to my mother's prayer to our Blessed Mother.

"We heard of the apparition of our Blessed Mother in Lipa and of the shower of rose petals inside the monastery and that the petals held against the light showed the face of our Mother. But we did not have plans to go to Lipa to witness what was happening there. It was enough for us to believe in the intercession of our Lady from a distance and entrust all our intentions, those of others and the whole world to her.

"Three weeks after my foot was cured, at 7:45 a.m. my parents and my brothers Tony and Larding were at breakfast. My parents would always take rice, eggs, *tapa* or corned beef and bread for breakfast. I would always go for *pan de sal* and fried egg. Larding never took rice or *pan de sal* but had a special breakfast of doughnuts and coffee. Tony had *pan de sal* or anything that was toasted. That particular morning, the baker of Ponga (the Chinese who owned the bakeshop) did not send us our bag of doughnuts and so Larding refused to take the *pan de sal* or rice. But after some gentle persuasion from my father and a promise to take him to the bakeshop at 10 a.m., Larding took one *pan de sal*, broke it into two pieces. Lo and behold, there was a light brown, thin transparent petal on one half of the bread. My father held it against the light and there was the beautiful face of our Blessed Mother.

"Papa showed it to Apo Laura, the mother of Tata Mundong, who was considered a wise woman as she was the eldest in the family and among the relatives. She immediately told us that it was given us by our Blessed Mother.

"Nanay Merced looked after our laundry. In her younger days she was the *yaya* of my older brothers, my sisters and me. But when I grew too stout for her to carry, she was assigned to wash and iron. My father allowed us to play with our cousins till 5:45 p.m. when we had to be home for the Angelus that we prayed as a family in front of our altar.

"My brother Tony came home after playing basketball, tired and wet with perspiration. Upon entering the house he pleaded with Nanay Merced not to put the ironing board away because he was going to ask her to iron some bubble gum wrappers on his T-shirt. Each wrapper would leave a print of Batman, Superman, or Robin Hood. He went to his room, removed the three wrappers from his pocket and started to unfold them even as he wondered why these were neatly folded when he had just stuffed them into his pocket after taking the bubble gum. As he unfolded them one by one, he found a petal in each wrapper. From where we were praying the Angelus we heard him shout, 'Who put these petals here?'

"We held the petals against the light and saw the face of our Blessed Mother in different positions: one with her head tilted looking down, the other with her hands held together against her breast in a praying position, while still another in a gesture of welcome, with her arms outstretched as in the Miraculous Medal. Apo Laura advised my father to show them to our parish priest who told him to keep it quiet and observe what would happen next.

"One morning in the summer of 1949, my father was reading the newspaper by the window while I was coloring a booklet next to him. We could see my mother watering the garden. Her favorite plant was a red carnation and she had a good number of them in pots plus other ornamental plants but no roses. Apo Laura had plenty of American roses in different colors but my mother, although she tried to cultivate roses, had not succeeded. As she put down the *tabo* on the edge of the window near us, she saw 10 rose petals neatly arranged in a row. This time it was not only our Blessed Mother's face but the Holy Family in one petal, the Sacred Heart, the Infant Jesus of Prague, the face of Jesus. The others were of Our Lady.

"My sister, Baby Elena Sunga, also found three petals on the floor in front of our altar while she was sweeping one morning.

"That same summer of '49, at 3:00 p.m., Miguel Abaya, a relative who was also a public school superintendent, sent his maid to our house to inquire if we had visitors from Manila because sweet perfume seemed to be coming from our house. He wanted to know who our visitors were and what the occasion was because they heard singing and merry-making. But when the maid came, everything was quiet and only our family was there. When we stood up from the table, we found petals scattered on the floor.

"This time our parish priest advised my father to report everything to the bishop and to show him the petals. Bishop Juan Sison in Vigan advised us to keep the story to ourselves and to avoid showing the petals to outsiders otherwise they would flock to our house and there would be no controlling them."

Abused

YOUNGBLOOD

Pollux

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

"Challenges are blessings in disguise," somebody once said. I disagree. Since I started high school eight years ago, I have never considered the challenges I faced to be blessings. Who would think a father's harsh words are a blessing?

From the time I was in high school, my life has been miserable. The pain and anger in my heart sometimes force me to fight back. I really can't understand why this is happening to me. My mom's relatives and friends tell me not to mind what my father says. But do they know how painful it is to hear yourself being called *tanga* or *p——g ina*, among other nasty things?

I can't understand why parents, including my own, think that whatever they say is always correct and that we children have no right to argue. Okay, they provide everything, but material things are worthless without their love. Some say parents say nasty words because they are concerned about their children and their future. Huh? Do nasty words reflect genuine concern?

I have never been out with friends to watch a movie or go malling. I have never been to a disco. I have never smoked a cigarette. I have never drunk beer. And I have never had a girl.

I graduated salutatorian in high school. I have won national and international awards and distinctions. I was sent abroad for a conference. I will graduate with high honors from the State University this April. Now tell me, what is wrong with me? Or should I say, who is wrong?

These questions have always been a puzzle, which I have never solved. People can't believe my story.

When I was in third year high school, I hurried home to show my medals to my father. Guess what he said. "I don't need those medals. All I need is a good son!"

I burst into tears. I never expected those words from him. Discipline, that's what he said he was trying to inculcate. Most of the time I feel ready to choke to death. Great discipline brought me to where I am right know and it may yet destroy my family and my life.

My college years have been generally better. I have to stay in the dormitory and I seldom go home. But my father would never give up. After four months of staying in the dorm, I came home for the first time. He got hold of my record of ATM withdrawals. He was mad when he saw I had no savings. I explained that I had to buy books, which were expensive. He said, "Maybe you used it to get drunk with your friends!" I got angry too.

Fights are always part of my coming home. He gets mad if I sleep until 10 a.m. He can't believe that on weekdays, I'd be lucky to get five hours of sleep. He believes his generation was much better than ours.

I am studying hard because we are not rich and we have no connections. I need good credentials to land a good job. Both of my parents are jobless. We live on my father's pension, which he gets from his government.

Sometimes I think he envies me for my achievements. He never went to college. But shouldn't he be happy because his son is doing what he failed to do?

He doesn't want to feel inferior to anyone. He calls Filipinos stupid because of what is happening to our country. He gets so angry with Filipino politicians and takes it out on me.

Sometimes I wish I were really stupid and ignorant, like he says, for then I would not understand the things he tells me. When he calls me those things, I am tempted to tell him to look in the mirror.

In April, I will finish college. He has no plans of attending my graduation. He never attended any of my graduations or awarding ceremonies. He would always cite his partial blindness as an excuse, but that never prevented him from travelling all over the world. If he loved me, I wouldn't need to invite him to my graduation. Search the entire archipelago, and you will not find a father who will not attend the graduation of his child, especially if the child is graduating with honors. He will even tell the whole world about it.

Once I worked as a student assistant for a dean. I took the opportunity to learn and save some money to buy essential things. I earned P2,500 monthly. With my savings, I bought a watch and a mobile phone. My father felt insulted when he learned that I was working. He accused me of wanting more than what I was getting from them. And I thought I was doing it to lighten their financial burden.

When I was a sophomore, I got a scholarship from the university. I only had to pay P45.50 per semester. I was so happy and I told my parents they could cut my allowance. My father got mad. He said I was too proud, and that he could not understand why I would worry about bringing down my expenses. He never took time to think and try to understand why was I doing those things.

When I attended a conference in Europe, he gave me a chance to visit another country and stay there for one week. On my trip home, I was wondering what he would say to me. A few days after arrival, he was berating me again for allegedly failing to even say thank you to him. But I did. It made me wonder if I should put on tape everything so that we need not argue anymore about such things.

I really don't know what I should do. If I shut up, he gets mad. If I answer back, he also gets mad. Sometimes I wish I would just vanish from the earth. But I can't. I have duties and responsibilities to do. I have dreams for my mom, sister and *yaya*, who has been with mom since she was small.

I have learned to shut up, but my father's words are slowly killing me. It might have been better if I were a battered kid. The wounds would heal and the marks would be gone in time. But the words he hurls at me I can never forget.

I am sick and tired of saying yes to everything he tells me even though I know it's wrong. I have no choice; otherwise I will be in big trouble.

I wrote this while hearing "music" from my father. I wonder if he will ever stop criticizing everything that I do. I have set out on a journey of knowing who I really am. I have discovered my real being, my strengths and weaknesses. I am afraid of losing my family and my future because of him. Already I am starting to lose my morale.

It seems that there are only two choices: Either I realize that I am wrong or my father realizes that he's wrong. If at a certain point in my life, I come to realize that I was wrong, I will accept it and be in despair because I didn't listen to my father.

His attitude toward my sister is completely different. She is the favorite in the family. She once ranked among the top 10 in her class and she got new clothes as her reward. I never got any gifts for my scholastic achievements. I went through high school with just two pairs of black pants. My sister gets three new skirts a year. This may look trivial, but it adds to my confusion and makes me ask what I had done to make him reject me.

As I was about to finish writing this, I saw our family picture on top of the table. It's a picture of my mother, my sister and me, without my father. Then the thought occurred to me: Could it be possible that he is not my father or she is not my mother? I am afraid to search and discover the truth. I am afraid to lose them. Hatred and emptiness are the two words I have in my heart. A heart described by my father as made of stone. A heart I wish were never there so I couldn't feel the pain.

I am still hoping for changes—even miracles. I am hoping that this is just a dream and that when I wake up, I will have the kind of family that I have always dreamed of.

Pollux, 20, is a senior at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

Imperfection makes for excitement

WHAT was the fabled 1975 "Thrilla in Manila" but an organizational coup for the Philippines?

For 14 glorious rounds, the legendary Muhammad Ali and his archrival Joe Frazier beat each other silly and came out of the titanic struggle bloodied and dazed. In the end, it did not matter that Ali, the sporting icon, won.

Simply put, the fight was a testament to man's courage and resilience. And to the eternal credit of Filipinos, the classic encounter took place at our very own Araneta Coliseum, and was beamed to almost every television set worldwide.

This must be what was in the mind of Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon when he proposed staging the heavyweight championship fight between Lennox Lewis and boxing's own bad boy Mike Tyson in Manila.

Demonized, and for cause, Tyson will always be a tough sell if we consider his string of criminal cases. Yes, a role model the convicted rapist can never be.

Still, one way of looking at it is to view the event as a purely sporting spectacle.

We can do this if we start thinking of athletes as your everyday Joes with feet of clay, and not as comic-book heroes who do no wrong. We can do this if we consider Mr. Nice Guy Michael Jordan's occasional on-court outbursts. Or see a Dennis Rodman for what he is—a KSP (*kulang sa pansin*), one crying out for attention.

Boxing is a dark world peopled by shady characters. It's a world where stage-managed brawls during pre-fight press conferences are taken for what they are—gimmicks. The sport can never be perfect, but sometimes imperfection is what makes something the more exciting.

—JOHN HENRY DODSON, 016 Lacanienta St., Cainta, Rizal

Turning Edsa II heroes into villains

THIS is to thank the INQUIRER for the Political Tidbits column of Belinda Olivares-Cunanan on Jan. 31. It brought good cheer to me that Cunanan added her voice to those endorsing the confirmation of Heherson Alvarez as environment secretary because "he is effective in that job...someone of stature who can talk back to the big multinational firms and the politicians when they violate the law."

When Edsa II was commemorated recently, I had a heavy heart and a sense of foreboding. I write as one of the co-complainants in Civil Society with then Rep. Heherson Alvarez in the impeachment complaint and one of the millions who thronged at Edsa in 2000.

The ills against which we raged are deep-seated; it will take time, much effort and dedication to right all the wrongs. But I had hoped for a few changes in the heart. I had, not very wisely perhaps, expected Erap and some of his cohorts to be repentant so that after contrition and restitution we could really achieve justice with reconciliation and peace. Unfortunately, they have been very unrepentant, and some, armed with their ill-gotten wealth, are trying to transform the heroes of Edsa II into villains.

I am most saddened to see that Alvarez, who persisted in filing the impeachment complaint against the advice of well-meaning friends and allies, is being pilloried by some misguided sectors in media. And for what crime? It seems to me only because of his uncompromising stand against those who seek ruin for our environment and to perpetuate graft in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

In trying to stop the rise in the amount of imports of ozone depleting substances in accordance with our international agreement, Alvarez has brought upon himself the ire and venom of a persistent group of detractors using the Internet and media. He has had the courage to revoke midnight Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECC's) that were given by his predecessor and the head of the Environmental Management Bureau who is now under investigation after the government's attention was called to the issue of ODS smuggling and illegal trade.

When we make it hard for men of high purpose and dedication to serve the nation, we make it easier for men with no principles to take our people back to the road of moral decay and economic ruin and environmental degradation.

Almost like a providential act of poetic justice, the column of Neal Cruz has provided the avenue for a balanced debate on the issue. That led to the discovery of Peter Abaya's initiative to legalize the smuggling of ozone depleting substances (ODS). Was it hubris that made Abaya articulate the rationale of his folly?

I was also deeply heartened to read the letter of UP professor Agerico de Villa and the commentary of a former journalist, Victor Peñaranda. Both have clarified and traced the original sin of a footnote insertion in a department order that caused the rise of health-threatening chemical imports contrary to our commitments in the Montreal Protocol.

This month of February, as we recall People Power I, we remember with gratitude those who have given their lives like Ninoy Aquino and countless others who sacrificed and stood firm in the struggle against the dictatorship. We must not forget Alvarez, a good man and a patriot. He is a consistent freedom fighter. Even now, after democracy has been restored, he is engaged in a battle against corruption and pollution. Quixotic, not at all. I have faith that in the end, good triumphs over evil.

—SIS. ARNOLD MARIE NOEL, Convent of the Holy Spirit, 8 Poinsettia Road, Quezon City

Spokesman bewails harassment of Desierto

THE CONTINUING harassment of our head, Ombudsman Aniano A. Desierto, this time through a second impeachment complaint, has unjustly wrought heavy damage on many areas of concern, among them the public service that we render.

Lately, Rep. Oscar Moreno has directed his sweeping attacks at the men and women of our office. We remain focused on our terrific volume of work, although with increasing difficulty, but our collective anxiety lies in large part on the possibility that the congressman's disinformation campaign would unfairly erode the public trust that is crucial to our office's effective functioning.

We are confident, however, that if our people view the storm from the light of the following unassailable facts, they will not be confused.

Neglect in investigating the tax credit scam? It is a fact that it was at the Ombudsman's initiative that 175 tax credit criminal cases were investigated and filed before the Sandiganbayan against finance officials, big textile businessmen and officials of oil companies. The Sandiganbayan found the evidence sufficient and ordered all the accused arrested. What is the impeachable offense here?

Bungled the prosecution? Regarding the summary dismissal by the court of 62 of the 175 tax credit cases, the court later realized its mistake and reinstated the charges filed upon the Ombudsman's motion. Justice Palattao called the open-court dismissal "precipitate" and that "from its conception, it is congenitally defective." The Ombudsman was thus vindicated and Moreno's complaint lost its basis.

Excluded the Chingkoes and Petron and Shell officials? The Ombudsman's detractors suppressed the Jan. 11, 2002 order which includes the three Chingkoes and the responsible Petron and Shell officials among those being held to account in the ongoing preliminary investigation.

Filed one flawed plunder charge? It is the piecemeal filing of 12 plunder cases involving the Chingkoes' 12 companies as wrongly suggested by Moreno that is erroneous and fatally flawed. Any thinking lawyer would know that only one plunder can be committed by a (set of) public officer(s) during the latter's entire term, considering the requirement of the law that ill-gotten wealth must be amassed, accumulated or acquired through a series or combination of overt or criminal acts. There is no ceiling set by the law as to the amount amassed and transactions combined. If 12 separate plunder cases were filed, as mistakenly recommended by Moreno, the accused would simply choose the weakest case for trial, secure an acquittal there, then bar the 11 others by invoking double jeopardy.

Revealing secret witness/documents? The Supreme Court in the celebrated case of Torralba vs. Sandiganbayan made it clear that all relevant evidence and testimony during preliminary investigation, as in the Chingkoe case, must be fully disclosed. Anything in the case records held secret would be later barred.

No plunder yet filed in court? In the earlier tax credit cases resolved, the evidence went only as far as showing that the parties who fraudulently secured tax credit certificates were unjustly enriched. There was no evidence at all showing that the proceeds of the tax credit certificates or any fraction thereof actually went to the pockets of the public officials involved. Strong suspicions of percentages or "SOP" had remained mere suspicions. Should the ombudsman be faulted, much more impeached, for filing sure-fire graft charges in those earlier cases in lieu of a plunder charge based on suspicion and speculation?

—JOSE T. DE JESUS JR., spokesperson, Office of the Ombudsman, Old Nawasa Bldg., 176 Arroceros St., Manila

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Copy cat

WHO could not have caught the picture of "Cc" or Carbon Copy, the world's first cloned kitten? The INQUIRER carried a colored photograph last Saturday of the adorable calico kitten, born last December. Cc only has one genetic parent, a female named Rainbow, which is also Cc's genetic twin.

There were two compelling reasons for me to immediately jump into the Internet to probe more into this cloned kitten. First, Cc was cloned at the College Station campus of the Texas A&M University, where I got my master's degree. It's a wealthy university, drawing from oil money and endowments from wealthy alumni and businesses. The cloning of Cc was part of a project called Copy Cat, made possible with the support of a private company called Genetic Savings & Clone (GSC), which hopes to go into large-scale cloning of pets.

PINOY KASI

Michael Tan

The second reason I was so interested was that I just lost an old dog, Sasha, about whom I wrote a column last week. Reading about Project Copy Cat made me think how wonderful it would have been to have had Sasha cloned.

GSC already offers genetic banking. For fees ranging from $1,000 to $2,000, GSC will store DNA extracted from your pet's tissues. This DNA can then be used to clone your pet later, many years after it has died, once the technology is developed.

Cc's creation was experimental and did not involve someone's pet. DNA was removed from the ova of Rainbow, one of GSC's laboratory cats, and inserted into other ova which had been emptied of its DNA. The ova with only this donated female DNA were then stimulated to begin dividing. Five embryos were created this way and were implanted in a surrogate mother cat, Allie. Only one embryo developed successfully into Cc.

It's interesting that Cc's coat markings are not a perfect match with those of the genetic mother, Rainbow, showing that a clone does not mean an exact reproduction. One of the researchers explained, "Cloning is reproduction, not resurrection." The researchers explain, on their website, that cats' coat markings depend on more than genetics. (Visit www.savingsandclone.com for more details. I'd especially recommend the site to biologists and veterinarians.)

Scientists have talked about other applications of this cloning of animals, which has already been done in mice, cows, goats, sheep and pigs. Cows that are able to produce large amounts of milk, for example, could be cloned to produce more high-yielding dairy cattle. In all these cases a surrogate mother is used to spare the "superior" DNA donor the strains of a pregnancy.

Not surprisingly, the cat cloning has renewed discussions around ethics. The New York Times interviewed Arthur Caplan, an ethicist at the University of Pennsylvania, who is concerned about the technology being too new. He asks what would happen if the cloned animals suffer and die young. (Dolly, the first cloned cow, turned out to have a number of inborn ailments.)

Caplan also asks, "Are you preying on grief and desperation that pet owners often have when they lose a pet to promise them something more than cloning can deliver?"

It's an interesting question that made me think, too, about what I do miss with Sasha. When I mourn her, I have memories of how she looked, down to the little silver streaks on her brown coat, but I know what I miss about Sasha are more of personality traits, all the way up to her sometimes infuriating stubbornness. It's not clear yet how much of those personality traits come with genes.

The Humane Society of the United States also issued a statement opposing cloning, pointing out that this does nothing for the problem of thousands of homeless pets. I couldn't agree more, and want to use this to make a pitch for a kitten that needs a home. A friend of mine rescued an abandoned kitten from the streets a few weeks back and has nursed it back to health. The kitten's mostly orange, about two months old and house-trained. Write Becky at brier@info.com.ph if you're interested in offering the kitten a home.

Let's get back to cloning. When you think about it, part of the charm of getting a pet is like that of having a new child: there's no way you can predict what the newcomer is going to be like. And the joys of rearing children, or pets, come with discovering something new each day. Having a cloned pet would probably make life more predictable, but less exciting.

This whole cloning business should make us think, too, about parenting. Human cloning would appeal mainly to people who think their genes are so superior that the world deserves more of them. The mere fact that these potential clients of cloning services think that way should be enough reason to ban such activities. (Can you imagine our egotistical politicians and celebrities cloning themselves?)

The issue of cloning also raises other questions about our priorities. If you read Saturday's Star you would have found a picture there of "Cc" but on the same page was the photograph of an Afghan refugee boy being prepared for burial. If cloning had been available to bring back the little boy, would the birth of that clone been enough to take away the bereaved family's grief, the community's despair?

Essence of sovereignty is free choice

I DO not wish to start this letter by asking where Conrado de Quiros got his degree as a writer, even if he raised a similar question when he asked in his column last Feb. 7 "where Naval got his degree to teach political science, and at UP too." Where one's degree came from should not be made a basis in ascertaining the validity or acceptability of one's opinion.

Firstly, let me refer De Quiros to Juan Sarmiento so that he can read the complete and unedited piece I faxed to the INQUIRER last Jan. 23. He will see the difference between what I actually wished to convey and how the edited piece came out.

Secondly, if only to provide the context of that piece which De Quiros liberally misinterpreted, allow me to inform him that it was my response to a supposed interview which one of the PDI staffers requested. I did not volunteer to write that piece.

Instructed to limit my response to a page, I did just that, though I had reservations. I believe such important and controversial questions would need more than a page to be adequately answered. On the morning of Jan. 22, I was informed by the editor that there was no more space for my supposed interview response. It was this lack of space, I suppose, which may have prompted the editor to instead insert the response in PDI's "Talk of the town." That boxed piece is the edited version of my piece.

Thirdly, I personally believe there are many facets to this controversy over the presence of the US forces. I believe, however, that we cannot perpetually blame the United States or any outsider for the travails that continue to haunt the Philippines. Somewhere, we ought to define that line where we take full responsibility as a people for whatever issues that may confront us. Moreover, we should learn from the lessons of the past, take charge of our present and future and say, "Enough!" Then we navigate our path, taking full responsibility for it.

The essence of sovereignty to me is self-determination and free choice. As a sovereign people, we decide who gets to enter our house. Whether we decide to invite or disallow US troops to our place, that power to decide rests solely on us. Sadly, however, De Quiros seems to think of sovereignty only in terms of barring US troops. The very act of deciding to allow them in or forbid them from coming in—that is, to me, an exercise of sovereignty.

Lastly, if De Quiros is really interested in finding out where I got my degree, surely he could ask UP Diliman's political science department for details. I imagine he knows how to dial the phone for directory assistance, albeit not as well as he can impute ill motives and cast aspersions on people whose opinions are not the same as his.

—JAIME B. NAVAL, assistant professor, Department of Political Science, Rm. 3001, Faculty Center, UP Diliman, Quezon City

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Israelis foil suicide bombing

JERUSALEM—Israeli police foiled an attempted suicide bombing on Sunday, shooting dead a Palestinian gunman in an exchange of fire as his accomplice fled in a car which later exploded, killing him and injuring three policemen.

The police action thwarted what would have been the second suicide bombing in less than 24 hours against Israelis, after a Palestinian attacker blew himself up at a shopping center in a West Bank settlement late on Saturday, killing two teenagers.

That attack in the Karnei Shomron settlement brought a retaliatory Israeli air strike in the Palestinian-ruled West Bank city of Nablus on Sunday and signs of public frustration in Israel with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

On Sunday, police commander Yaacov Borovsky said the two Palestinians had been on their way to carry out a shooting and suicide bombing at an army base near the northern Israeli city of Hadera.

At least 851 Palestinians and 263 Israelis have been killed since a Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation began in September 2000.

Borovsky said traffic police had stopped the car of the two Palestinians on suspicion it had been stolen. A passenger got out and opened fire at police outside the base. Police shot dead the man, who was found to have a bomb strapped to his body.

During the exchange, the car driver sped off and police gave chase. Within minutes, the vehicle exploded.

"The terrorist blew himself up as a result of us shooting at him," traffic policeman Yehezkel Halabiya told Israel Radio.

"My two partners in the car were wounded, I was lightly burned in the face. It was a very big explosion." *Reuters*

PALESTINIANS carry the body of Nael Saqer, one of four Palestinians killed by Israeli troops during an Israeli attack on the El Bureij refugee camp, during his funeral in the Gaza Strip Feb. 17. At least 851 Palestinians and 263 Israelis have died since September 2000. REUTERS

Karzai vows stern justice for minister's assassins

KABUL—Afghan leader Hamid Karzai on Sunday vowed stern justice for high-ranking officials in his own government who he said assassinated the country's aviation minister.

Karzai has blamed the minister's death on a personal vendetta among government officials despite initial reports that said he was killed by a mob of would-be Islamic pilgrims furious over flight delays to Saudi Arabia.

This year's hajj—the annual pilgrimage to Mecca - has become a source of contention as the government tries to restore order to post-Taliban Afghanistan. Thousands of Afghans are unable to make the journey because of a lack of flights and, in the case of a US-controlled airport in southern Afghanistan, delays in repairing bomb-damaged runways.

Britain, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were sending planes to pick up thousands of would-be pilgrims. Bad weather caused some of those planes to be diverted to the Pakistani cities of Peshawar and Karachi, Karzai said Sunday. But he said "tough work is going on" to get the pilgrims on their way.

Peacekeepers have said that 7,000 pilgrims have been issued Saudi visas for the hajj, but only several hundred have been able to travel.

"Hajj flights are being given absolute priority over coalition aircraft" in using Afghan airspace, said Jonathan Turner, a spokesperson for Afghanistan's international peacekeeping force.

The pilgrimage draws millions each year to Mecca, Islam's holiest site. Islam requires the journey at least once in a lifetime of every able-bodied Muslim who has the means to go. *AP*

Bush voices support for Koizumi reforms

KOIZUMI with Bush (center) and Japan's official hostess, Kiyoko Fukuda, at Tokyo's Meiji Shrine Feb. 18. REUTERS

TOKYO—US President George W. Bush on Monday called Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi a "great reformer," giving support to the politically ailing Japanese leader in his battle to reform a recession-bound economy.

But in a sign of US concern about Japan's deep-seated economic problems, Bush told Koizumi that a strong Japanese economy was important for the world, domestic media reported.

In return, Koizumi vowed to forge ahead with painful changes he says are vital to get the economy moving, the reports said.

As he began the talks, Bush also dismissed uneasiness among US allies over his efforts to expand the US-led war on terrorism to "axis of evil" states Iraq, Iran and North Korea.

"They understand our position," Bush said when asked about concern among some allies over his confrontive stance.

Bush and Koizumi were to hold a joint news conference after their talks Monday, and the US president is scheduled to address the Japanese parliament on Tuesday.

Before meeting at a government conference house, Bush and Koizumi watched horse-mounted archers perform a warriors' ritual.

The display was part of a visit to a shrine dedicated to the Meiji Emperor, whose progressive 1868-1912 reign ushered Japan out of isolation and into a position of world power.

Japan is now the world's second largest economy, but it is mired in its third recession in a decade and faces a possible financial crisis that could have serious global fall-out.

"I'm planning on talking about what a great reformer he is.... how we've got great confidence in his ability to lead this country," Bush said ahead of his meeting with Koizumi.

The president was expected to avoid publicly lecturing Koizumi and to show the Japanese leader he had US support. *Reuters*

Nepal rebels kill 128 cops, soldiers in weekend attacks

KATMANDU—At least 128 mostly soldiers and policemen were killed in three attacks by Maoist insurgents in the fiercest rebel offensive since the communists began their bloody rebellion six years ago, Cabinet sources said Sunday.

"At least 128 people including 48 soldiers, 75 policemen, four civil servants and a civilian were killed in three attacks by Maoist insurgents in western and southern Nepal on Saturday night," a Cabinet source said.

Among the dead soldiers, their commander, a major was also killed, the source said.

The Cabinet convened an emergency session to discuss the attacks, the fiercest since the government declared a state of emergency in the country in November.

Security forces have been kept on high alert fearing further attacks by the rebels in the Nepalese capital and outlying districts.

Most of the victims were killed in two attacks in the western Accham district, 350 km west of the capital.

Four policemen were also killed and five injured in another Maoist attack in the southern Sarlahi district.

A defense ministry official said more than 100 rebels could have been killed in the action at Accham, but this could not be confirmed as the rebels carried away the bodies of their fallen colleagues. The bodies of three Maoist rebels were found late Sunday in Accham, the source said.

The attacks came as Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba prepared to ask parliament for an extension to the three-month emergency measures.

A home ministry source said that in Accham the Maoists had first attacked the Saphebagar airport at about midnight on Saturday. *AFP*

Georgia manager accused of dumping bodies bailed

NOBLE, Georgia—Crematorium manager Brent Ray Marsh, accused by authorities of dumping bodies instead of cremating them, was released on bail Sunday after being charged with five counts of theft by deception.

Law enforcement officials allege Marsh, 28, accepted bodies for cremation from funeral homes but instead buried them in woods or stacked them one upon another in vaults at Tri-State Crematory's five hectare site in Noble, Georgia, some 140 km northwest of Atlanta.

Soon after their search began Sunday morning authorities discovered five vaults inside a warehouse area, having earlier thought 80 bodies could be on the property. By late Sunday, the figure had risen to 97 bodies, CNN reported.

Walker County medical examiner Kris Sperry expects the steel vaults, which typically hold one casket and are 2.1 meters long, by 1.2 meters wide, to hold more bodies.

"Potentially, we're looking at finding 200 bodies, maybe more," Sperry said.

He said the most recent body to be picked up from a funeral home was on Valentine's Day.

Marsh, who was arrested Saturday after the Environmental Protection Agency received a tip there was a decaying body on the property, was released on a $25,000-bond Sunday afternoon.

A dog walker stumbled over a skull on Friday, prompting authorities to inspect the site and leading to the grisly discovery. *AFP*

BODIES in white bags are seen in an aerial view of the Tri-State Crematory in Noble, Georgia, Feb. 17. REUTERS

France bids farewell to the franc after 641 years

PARIS—The French franc was no longer legal tender after midnight Sunday, with the euro taking over as the sole official currency.

The euro entered general circulation as cash in France and 11 other European countries on Jan. 1. But to ease the transition, national currencies were allowed to continue to circulate until Feb. 28 at the latest.

France became the third country to abandon its old currency for good, following the Netherlands and Ireland.

The franc was born by decree on Dec. 5, 1360 to celebrate the release of King Jean II from English captivity—the name means "free" in Old French.

It faced challenges from gold and silver ecus, louis, and testons (from the Italian testa or head) before the 1789-1799 revolution established the Germinal franc and the ensuing Napoleonic Empire ensured supremacy of yet another franc.

Its most recent transformation was in December 1958 following a period of repeated devaluations, when president Charles de Gaulle unveiled the new franc, worth 100 old francs.

President Jacques Chirac, who claims de Gaulle's political heritage, said Friday he was "filled with emotion" while signing the decree that presaged the end of the franc.

Chirac nonetheless looked ahead, adding: "The answer to global evolution is not to fall back upon oneself, it is action and ambition."

His comments echoed the general sentiment in France and throughout the euro zone, where the single currency has slipped smoothly into daily use.

While the introduction of the euro required certain "adjustments" on the part of the public in early January, there has been no fundamental change in the payment practices of French shoppers, according to Philippe Giraud-Sauveur of the French banking federation.

An association monitoring the use of debit cards noted that "following a surge in withdrawals by card in the first two weeks of the euro, the pace returned to normal."

Cash payments by consumers also increased, "not to get rid of francs, as one would have thought, but to become accustomed to using the euro," the finance ministry concluded. *AFP*

EU may impose 'smart sanctions' on Zimbabwe

BRUSSELS/HARARE—European Union foreign ministers may decide to impose "smart sanctions" on Zimbabwe on Monday following President Robert Mugabe's expulsion of the head of a European Union mission to observe next month's election.

Mugabe sought to shore up local support over the weekend, having talks in Mozambique on Sunday with African leaders after ordering out Swedish diplomat Pierre Schori, accusing him of "political arrogance."

"Now that Schori has been forced to leave, an assessment has to be made on the viability of the EU mission in Zimbabwe, and that will be the task of the ministers in Brussels on Monday," European Commission spokeswoman Emma Udwin said.

Schori described his ejection as absurd.

"They are trying to fabricate a bad case on semi-legal grounds, but the whole thing is absurd," he told reporters after arriving in London from Zimbabwe.

Asked whether there was any chance of free and fair elections in Zimbabwe on March 9-10, Schori told Britain's Channel 4 television news: "Of course it doesn't look bright."

The 15 EU ministers have threatened to impose targeted sanctions against Mugabe and his closest associates—including a visa ban and a freeze on their overseas assets—if they do not allow the 30-strong observer mission for the presidential election to carry out its job. *Reuters*

Speight gets death for treason

SUVA, Fiji—Fijian coup leader George Speight, sentenced to death Monday for treason nearly two years after storming Parliament with a gang of nationalist gunmen, had his sentence reduced to life in prison by the country's president.

Attorney General Qoriniasi Bale said President Ratu Josefa Iloilo had signed a decree commuting the death sentence for Speight to life.

The order followed a surprise move in the High Court where Speight pleaded guilty to a charge of treason at the start of his trial in the capital, Suva.

The order reducing Speight's sentence "was signed by his excellency the president this afternoon. That is now the legal position," Bale said.

People sentenced to life in Fiji normally serve about 10 years in jail.

Earlier, Speight sat in the dock, his shaven head bowed, and wept as presiding judge Justice Michael Scott put on a black cap and ordered him hanged, adding, "May the lord have mercy on your soul."

Speight's partner, sitting in the gallery behind him, also wiped tears from her eyes as the sentence was passed.

Lawyers for Speight did not immediately react to the president's decision.

Speight's Australian attorney, Ron Cannon, had told the High Court Speight was pleading guilty to help heal the country's ethnic wounds.

"This would then put the matter to rest and we hope will be accepted by the community as our contribution to the stability of the country and to reconciliation," Cannon said.

Before Iloilo issued the decree, Cannon had warned Speight's supporters that any overreaction such as rioting can only have "an adverse effect on his application for mercy."

Despite the volatile events in court, police reported no incidents in the capital, Suva, or in other parts of the country.

Fiji Labor Party leader Mahendra Chaudhry, whose government was ousted by Speight's coup, said after the death sentence was passed he was "relieved" the matter was ended. Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase declined comment.

When the court resumed later Monday 10 of Speight's 12 accomplices pleaded guilty to charges of illegally taking and holdin g lawmakers hostage for 56 days. They had faced treason charges but these were reduced after Speight's guilty plea.

The charge carries a maximum penalty of seven years but their punishment was not immediately set.

Two other defendants will still face treason charges when the court resumes Tuesday.

Police set up roadblocks on main roads into the capital, Suva, and armed soldiers pushed back small groups of spectators who turned out to watch Speight and his 12 co-accused arrive at court in a red police bus.

The treason charges followed the group's armed takeover of Parliament amid riots, arson and looting of businesses in central Suva 21 months ago. The ethnic Indian-led government of Chaudhry was ousted by the indigenous Fijian coup in May 2000. *AP*

FAILED Fijian coup leader George Speight arrives in a prison bus at Suva court Feb. on the first day of his treason trial. REUTERS

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Lioness defies nature by adopting baby oryx

NAIROBI—A grown lioness who baffled experts in Kenya last month by adopting a baby oryx—a kind of antelope Africa's top predator usually likes to eat—has astounded them again by adopting another one on Valentine's Day.

Game wardens at Samburu National Park said on Saturday they had found the lioness with another new-born oryx, giving it affection and protection from other predators prowling around in the hope of an easy meal.

"She adopted the oryx the day before yesterday," warden Mark Lenyakopir said. "She is still there with the calf, and the calf is doing well.

"There are other lions trying to attack the lioness to get to the baby, but the rangers are protecting them and the lioness is protecting the calf."

Bizarrely, the lioness allowed the oryx's real mother to come and feed her calf on Friday, before chasing her away again.

It is the second time she has defied nature and struck a strange bond with an oryx. In January, she protected an adopted oryx for two weeks before a hungry male lion with a strictly traditional diet seized the baby while its "mother" was napping. *Reuters*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, February 19, 2002
1st Week of Lent

1st Reading: **Is 55:10-11**
Gospel: **Mt 6:7-15**

Jesus said to his disciples, "When you pray, do not use a lot of words, as the pagans do, for they hold that the more they say, the more chance they have of being heard. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need, even before you ask him.

This, then, is how you should pray:
Our Father in heaven,
holy be your name, your kingdom come
and your will be done, on earth
as in heaven.
Give us today the kind of bread we need.
Forgive us our debts
just as we have forgiven those
who are in debt to us.
Do not bring us to the test
but deliver us from the evil one.

If you forgive others their wrongs, your Father in heaven will also forgive yours. If you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive you either.

Commentary

God's word has purpose and power (the message of today's first reading from Isaiah 55). In choosing to open your heart to the daily gospel, you signify your desire to be the ground to which the word comes like rain, making that ground fertile and fruitful. Today's word invites us to pray and teaches us how. The temptation is not to bother, because it is so simple and so familiar: the Lord's prayer. Take a moment, not to read it only, but to put your heart behind each line. When you can be alone, perhaps while riding the bus, come home to your heart, enter the desert with Jesus, and remain there with just a word or two: Our Father. A presence will be with you, knowing you, seeing and recreating the depths within you, like rain touching the earth, with purpose and with power.

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SUPREME COURT GUIDELINES

REMEDIAL LAW (EVIDENCE)—Equipoise rule—Under the equipoise rule, where the evidence on an issue of fact is in equipoise or there is doubt on which side the evidence preponderates, the party having the burden of proof loses. The equipoise rule finds application if the inculpatory facts and circumstances are capable of two or more explanations, one of which is consistent with the innocence of the accused and the other consistent with his guilt, for then the evidence does not fulfill the test of moral certainty, and does not suffice to produce a conviction. Briefly stated, the needed quantum of proof to convict the accused of the crime charged is found lacking. And in this case, the petitioner must be declared innocent and set free. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Quisumbing, Second Division, Tin v. People, G.R. No. 126480, August 10, 2001]

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Cebu businessmen support Camacho

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday received a pleasant surprise from Cebu-based businessmen: A statement of support for his confirmation.

Camacho almost cried when Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) president Sabino Dapat read a resolution of support during the "Yearend Economic Briefing" at the Marriott Hotel.

Dapat was supposed to give a short remark after Camacho, Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II, and representatives of concerned government agencies had read their respective reports.

To Camacho's surprise, Dapat read the CCCI resolution supporting the confirmation of his appointment as finance secretary.

The CCCI board of trustees passed the resolution on Feb. 13. A copy of the resolution was sent to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Camacho bowed with hands on the chest as Dapat read the resolution. When he faced the businessmen again, the secretary was blushing and teary-eyed.

"I want to express my sincerest gratitude. This is the kind of support that keeps me going," he said.

The businessmen responded by giving him a standing ovation.

In the resolution, the businessmen cited Camacho for his "professionalism and unquestionable competency" as well as his "impressive credentials and deep knowledge in finance," which were gained from more than two decades of global exposure.

"As a key member of the Philippine Economic Team, Secretary Camacho has made positive impression with foreign investors during business missions," they said.

The resolution noted that feedback about Camacho's performance has been highly encouraging. Camacho, it said, also helped turn around the negative image of the nation in the international arena.

Interviewed over radio station dyLA later, Camacho reiterated his gratitude to the businessmen.

He said he was confident that he will finally get the nod of the Commission on Appointments as 14 members of the CA subcommittee on finance already voted for him.

During that subcommittee hearing, only Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta voted against his confirmation, while Sen. Blas Ople abstained.

Oreta has strongly opposed Camacho's appointment on the basis of his alleged participation in the "sham transaction" involving zero-coupon bonds.

In Davao City on Saturday, Camacho said the government would continue to float the controversial P300-billion bonds unless the Senate says otherwise.

He told local businessmen that as a government financing strategy, President Macapagal-Arroyo has given the finance department full powers to float the 10-year bonds through a public auction.

Camacho said that with the bonds, widely known as the Peace bonds, the government would lower its borrowing cost, regardless of who is behind the bidding. ***With a report from Ayan Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

27 hospitalized after eating bad 'daing na bangus'

By Yolanda Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

DAGUPAN CITY—At least 27 people were treated for allergy in Bolinao, Pangasinan, after eating *bangus* (milkfish) suspected to have been affected by the fish kill early this month.

The residents, who came from 10 villages in the town, were treated at the Medicare Community Hospital in Bolinao after they complained of headache, dizziness, vomiting, difficulty of breathing, abdominal pain, nape pain, itchiness, chest pain and skin redness.

The patients were admitted to the hospital between Feb. 3 and 11.

About P600 million worth of *bangus*, cultured in fish pens and cages in Bolinao, were affected by the massive fish kill on Feb. 1 and 3.

Mayor's ban

Bolinao Mayor Jesus Celeste said that after the fish kill struck, he imposed a ban on eating shellfish and *bangus* affected by the calamity.

"However, some residents asked for *bangus* and dried these. Perhaps, because the *bangus* were no longer fresh, those who ate them fell ill," Celeste explained.

He said provincial and local officials held a *bangus* festival last week, where they ate *bangus* and other marine products gathered in Bolinao, to prove that these were safe for consumption.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources also issued a report certifying that the shellfish gathered from Bolinao's municipal waters were negative of the red tide toxin.

Celeste said he asked the Department of Health to investigate the cause of the residents' illnesses.

Reports said the regional DOH was investigating the cases of at least 75 residents from Bolinao who reportedly suffered from allergy after eating dried *bangus*.

Dr. Reverine Cayabyab, epidemiologist of the regional DOH and who was assigned to investigate the cases, said the victims suffered from "allergy secondary to consumption of *daing na* (dried) *bangus*."

She said the patients were not confined in the hospitals.

"Immediately after eating, there was redness in the face and the entire body. But we do not know yet what could have caused the allergy. It was not necessarily because of the fish kill," Cayabyab said.

Real cause?

However, she could not cite the real cause of the patients' allergies because "we are still analyzing the data."

DOH officials said they would coordinate with officials of the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute to find out what really caused the patients' allergies.

Earlier, the UPMSI clarified that there was no malice in the issuance of the report that a bloom of red-pigmented plankton in the municipal waters caused the fish kill.

Gil Jacinto, UPMSI director, said "we only wanted to tell the people what we know and we wanted to tell them the truth."

He explained that the report did not mention *bangus* as affected by the organism associated with fish kills.

"What we reported was (that) there was a (plankton) bloom and that it was the first in the country. We also sent a letter to (Celeste) that there were indications the shells may be toxic. But we never said anything about (the effects) of the plankton on the fish," Jacinto said.

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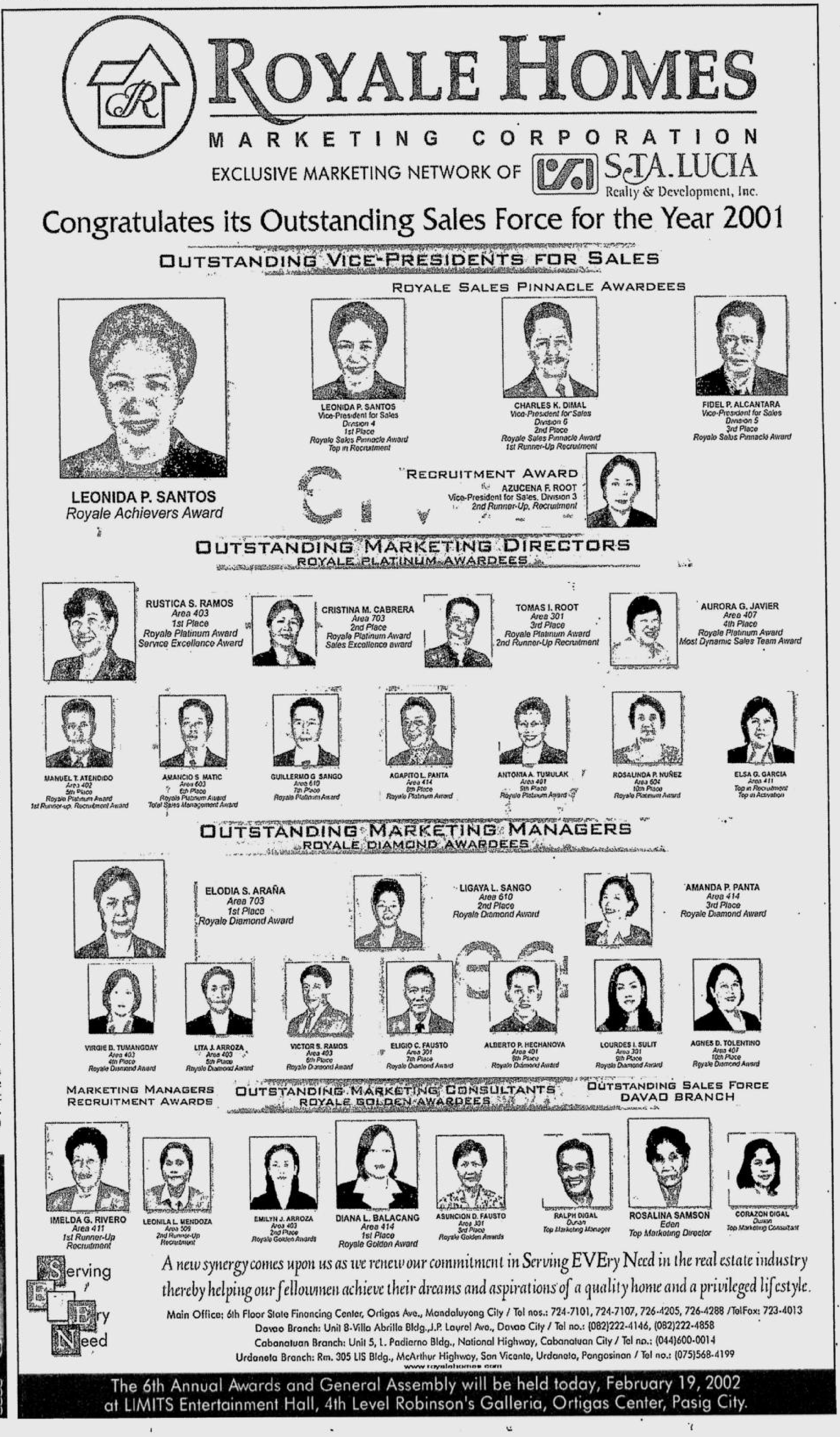
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3rd Place
Royale Diamond Award

VIRGIE B. TUMANGDAY
Area 403
4th Place
Royale Diamond Award

LITA J. ARROZA
Area 403
5th Place
Royale Diamond Award

VICTOR S. RAMOS
Area 403
6th Place
Royale Diamond Award

ELIGIO C. FAUSTO
Area 301
7th Place
Royale Diamond Award

ALBERTO P. HECHANOVA
Area 401
8th Place
Royale Diamond Award

LOURDES I. SULIT
Area 301
9th Place
Royale Diamond Award

AGNES D. TOLENTINO
Area 407
10th Place
Royale Diamond Award

MARKETING MANAGERS RECRUITMENT AWARDS

IMELDA G. RIVERO
Area 411
1st Runner-Up
Recruitment

LEONILA L. MENDOZA
Area 509
2nd Runner-Up
Recruitment

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EMILYN J. ARROZA
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1st Place
Royale Golden Award

ASUNCION D. FAUSTO
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Royale Golden Awards

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The 6th Annual Awards and General Assembly will be held today, February 19, 2002 at LIMITS Entertainment Hall, 4th Level Robinson's Galleria, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

TACLOBAN PROPOSAL

Health insurance for sex workers seen

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—This could be a first: Health insurance for the city's commercial sex workers.

That is, if the plan of the regional office of the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth-8) materializes.

Reynaldo Capangpangan, Philhealth regional manager, disclosed that his office was mulling over the idea of enrolling the city's commercial sex workers (CSWs) under his agency's health insurance program.

"They need to be enrolled because they are in the most hazardous position due to the nature of their work," he said during a press conference last Wednesday marking Philhealth's seventh anniversary.

Capangpangan said the mechanics of the plan had yet to be drawn, particularly on the monthly premium that will be charged the CSWs.

With the health insurance, Capangpangan said, the CSWs needed not worry where they will get the money for treatment if they contract diseases, especially sex-related ones.

Records at the City Health Office (CHO) revealed that as of January, 86 CSWs have been discovered to have sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

The same records indicated that 81 women were working at pub houses in the city, but the CHO said the number could reach more than 100 if all CSWs, including "pick-up girls" or those who hang out in city streets at night waiting for clients, register.

Capangpangan said his office would not have difficulty enrolling in Philhealth those who were already registered with the CHO. But the "pick-up girls" could be a different matter, he said.

"That's why if we push through with this plan, we will visit (the streets) at nights to encourage them to enroll in our health insurance program," he said.

Dr. Ramon de la Cruz, city health officer, welcomed Capangpangan's proposal. "That is a good plan. At least they (CSWs) will be protected," he said.

Elena, who is working in one of the bars in the city, was also receptive to the idea.

"That is for our benefit. We could be given assistance by the government if the need arises," she said in the vernacular.

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Baler holds 'Suman Festival' today

BALER, Aurora—Lots of *suman* (native rice cake) will flood this town today when residents and officials celebrate their "Suman Festival."

Local officials said the delicacy "*sumang* Baler" would be featured in the festival, and residents and visitors can partake of the delicacies for free.

Suman is made from cooked glutinous rice mixed with sugar and wrapped in coconut leaves.

The *sumang* Baler, including those made in Aurora's seven other towns, is a famous native cake delicacy because of its distinct taste which is a bit sweeter than those made in other parts of the country, according to residents.

Former Gov. Eduardo Ong started the festival five years ago. The past festivals were chaired by his wife Ramoncita, now governor of the province.

The event is among the features of the 23rd founding anniversary of Aurora Day.

But Vice Gov. Anabelle Tangson said the festival "has no historical and cultural relevance."

She said *suman* is not exclusively from Aurora as there are many other places producing it.

She said the province should instead promote Aurora's export-quality products, like the *sabutan* hat and the local furniture and handicraft made of coconut.

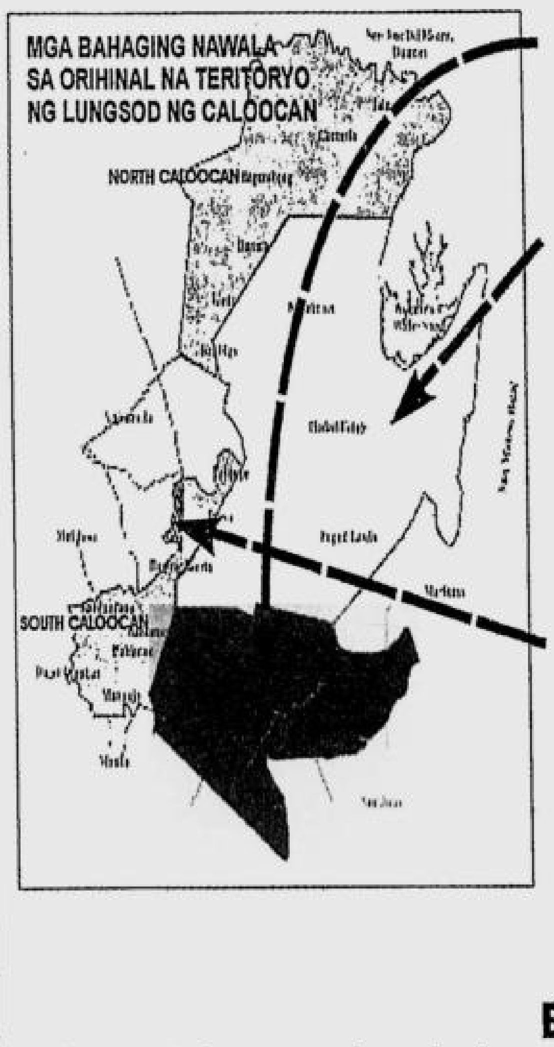
Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Rep. Edgar R. Erice, 2nd District-Caloocan City
May akda ng HB Nos. 4388 at 4389

PANAWAGAN NG MGA MAMAMAYAN SA IKA-40 TAON NG PAGKAKATATAG NG LUNGSOD NG CALOOCAN

(Peb. 16, 1961 - Peb. 16, 2002)

KATARUNGAN SA PAGKAWALA NG MALAKING BAHAGI NG KANYANG TERITORYO


MGA BAHAGING NAWALA SA ORIHINAL NA TERITORYO NG LUNGSOD NG CALOOCAN
NORTH CALOOCAN
SOUTH CALOOCAN

1939 Commonwealth Act. 502-- Nagtatag sa Lungsod Quezon at umangkin ng 1,824 ektaryang lupain ng Caloocan

1949 Republic Act 392-- Inangkin na naman ng Lungsod Quezon ang 7,168 ektarya na nagresulta sa pagkakahati ng Caloocan sa dalawang hindi magkaruktong na bahagi. Ayon sa mga pulitiko, ito ay ginawa upang maialis sa Caloocan ang mga lugar na hindi pinagwawagihan ng mga pulitiko noon

2000 Republika Act 9019-- Inangkin naman ng Malabon ang mahigit kumulang 80 ektarya sa Bgy. 160 at 161 (Bgy. Baesa, Caloocan) kung saan mayroong paaralan ang Caloocan at mga residente doon na lehitimong botante ng lungsod

Bawiin ang dati'y lupa ng Caloocan
Suportahan ang kambal na panukala ni Representative Edgar "EGAY" Erice sa Kongreso

- House Bill 4388-- Layong bawiin ang mahigit kumulang 80 ektarya na sinakop ng Malabon
- House Bill 4389-- Layong bawiin ang ilang bahagi ng lupa na inangkin ng lungsod Quezon

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over the Eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao.

source: pagasa

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI32° Lo 20°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 24° Lo 12°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 16°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 18°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 19°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 18°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	HI 29° Lo 24°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 21°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 22°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	HI 28° Lo 25°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 25°
Tacloban	Widespread Rains	HI 29° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	HI 28° Lo 23°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 25°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	HI 29° Lo 22°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/02/19/02

ROUNDUP

Village head arrested

BACOLOD CITY—Police arrested a barangay chair after 11 high-powered guns and explosives were seized from his house in Malubog here during a raid on Friday. Senior Insp. Moises Villaceran Jr., Criminal Investigation and Detection Group provincial chief, said only three of the guns seized from the suspect, Charlie Analucas, were covered with licenses. Analucas refused to explain why the firearms and explosives were kept in his house.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

P10 wage hike review

BACOLOD CITY—Three big labor organizations have asked the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board to reconsider its decision granting only a P10 increase in daily wage. The groups insisted on P50 across-the-board increase for all workers, except for managerial employees. In a joint petition, the labor groups said the new wage level approved in December was a misinterpretation and misevaluation of economic data by the wage board.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

3 face murder raps

ROXAS CITY—Murder charges were filed last week against three persons for the death of nursing student Charibelle Lobo. Charged before the city prosecutor's office on Feb. 12 were Carlito Dolfo, 38, of Arnaldo Boulevard here, and two unidentified suspects. Dolfo, who was in Manila, denied the accusation in an interview with a radio station. Lobo, 18, was found dead on a grassy lot near her home in Barangay Baybay on Jan. 15, three days after she was reported missing by her family. ***Gerry Pagharion, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Prelate pleases Mangyans

CALAPAN CITY—More than a week after Archbishop Antonio Franco, the Pope's representative to the Philippines, came to Oriental Mindoro for a pastoral visit, the Mangyans in Naujan town still could not forget his warm interaction with them. The papal nuncio even ate fern cooked in coconut milk and danced the tribal way. In his talk with local government officials, the 66-year-old prelate noted that the government and the Church served the same people. He assured the government of the "responsible collaboration of the Church for the advancement of the Mindoreños."

Donna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

NPA rebel surrenders

CALAPAN CITY—After experiencing difficulties of life in the mountains as a communist rebel, Angel "Ka Emer" Machon, 26, of Barangay Alcate, Victoria, surrendered to the provincial government last week. Machon belonged to a group led by one "Ka Lumen" under the New People's Army's Lucio de Guzman Command. Victoria Mayor Alfredo Ortega and Alcate Barangay Chair Aurelio de Torres surrendered Machon to Gov. Bartolome Marasigan Sr. on Feb. 11. Machon said he joined the NPA last November and had been undergoing training with 20 other recruits.

Donna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Cops kill drug convict

DAVAO CITY—A man convicted for drugs was killed while five others were arrested during a police operation on Feb. 9. The fatality was identified as Hilario Olaer, 37, who reportedly served a prison term at the Iwahig Penal Colony in Palawan, of Purok 1, San Pedro Extension here. Chief Insp. Fulgencio Pavo, head of the city police's Heinous Crimes and Investigation Section, said the lawmen were forced to shoot Olaer after he fired at them and was about to throw a grenade.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

NUJP picks acting chair

BACOLOD CITY—Local journalist Edgar Cadagat was chosen acting chair of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines in a consensus voting by the group's officials last Friday. Chosen acting vice chair was Salvacion Espina-Varona, Manila Times news editor. The NUJP chairmanship became vacant after Jose Capadocia asked the board that he be allowed to take a leave, having decided to join the staff of Press Secretary Noel Cabrera. Elections will be held in August during the NUJP's national congress.

Barangay call center

BARANGAY Bonawon in Siaton, Negros Oriental, became a beneficiary of Smart Communications's satellite-based Smart Tawag Center that provides the fishing community its very first telecommunications facility. Located one and a half hours by bus from capital of Dumaguete City, Bonawon is surrounded by mountains, making it a radio dead spot. The call center will serve more than 8,000 residents.

Batangas town mayor gunned down by former policeman

By Mei Magsino
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LIAN, Batangas—Mayor Sixto "Baby" Vergara died an hour after he was shot three times by a former policeman at the garage of his house in Barangay Poblacion here at 4:30 a.m. yesterday.

Supt. Rolando Lorenzo, provincial police director, identified the suspect as Juancho Tolentino, a former policeman who was harboring an old grudge against the mayor.

Vergara, 51, died from three bullet wounds inflicted by a .45 cal. pistol in different parts of the body.

Police said Tolentino, who was able to escape, had long espied on Vergara's activities and planned his attack.

The suspect did not even use the front gate, which was closed, when he entered the mayor's house and waited for him to come out.

Vergara, a second-term mayor, was supposed to go to Manila yesterday for an appointment.

Sr. Insp. Francisco Ebreo, town police chief, said Tolentino could still be hiding in the province.

The fallen mayor, along with four town officials, was facing a graft case before the Office of the Ombudsman.

He had also been charged with falsification of public documents, violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and malversation of public funds.

Vergara's camp claimed that the charges were politically motivated.

Soldiers hunt cop killers

LEGAZPI CITY—Government troops are pursuing communist rebels who killed three policemen and wounded another on Saturday in an attack on a police *Kababayan* Center at the pier site in Pioduran town, Albay.

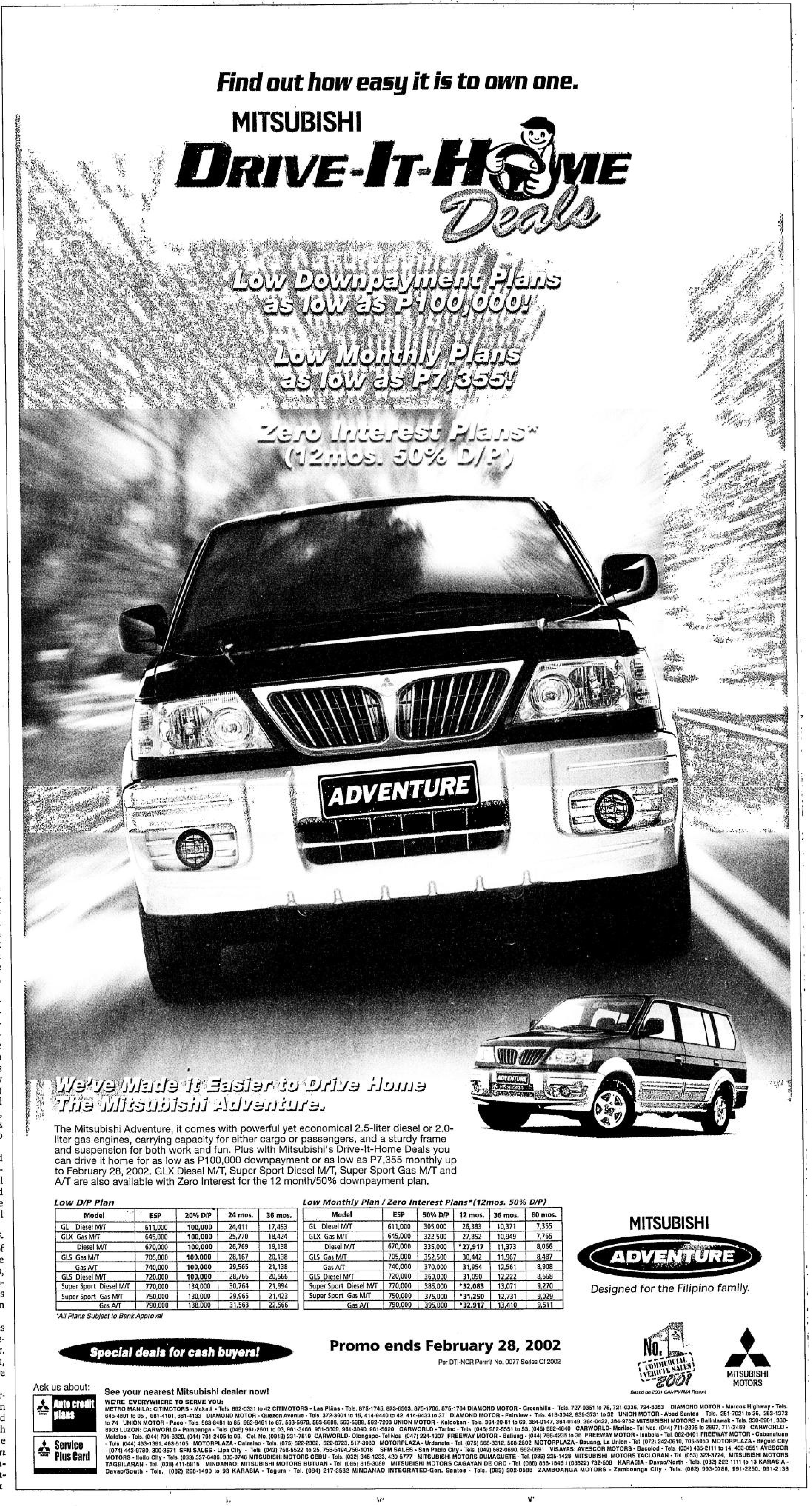
Col. Dante Bonifacio, Army 202nd Infantry Brigade commander, sent a company of soldiers to the jungles of Pioduran and neighboring areas to pursue the New People's Army (NPA) rebels who killed SPO4 Macario Odeña, SPO1 Alfredo Lopez and SPO1 Sancho Sueso.

Seriously wounded and now at the recovery room of the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital here is PO2 Emmanuel Macandog.

Barely two days after the attack, a fire of still unknown cause swept a row of houses, mostly made of bamboo and nipa, in Zones 4 and 5 in the town proper.

Some 400 families were rendered homeless, according to Sr. Insp. Gilbert Dolot, provincial deputy fire marshal.

Dolot said 75 percent of the houses in Zone 4 were damaged by the fire, which lasted two and one half hours. ***Job Belen and Tony Macasinag, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***



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GLX Gas M/T	645,000	100,000	25,770	18,424
Diesel M/T	670,000	100,000	26,769	19,138
GLS Gas M/T	705,000	100,000	28,167	20,138
Gas A/T	740,000	100,000	29,565	21,138
GLS Diesel M/T	720,000	100,000	28,766	20,566
Super Sport Diesel M/T	770,000	134,000	30,764	21,994
Super Sport Gas M/T	750,000	130,000	29,965	21,423
Gas A/T	790,000	138,000	31,563	22,566

*All Plans Subject to Bank Approval

Low Monthly Plan / Zero Interest Plans(12mos. 50% D/P)*

Model	ESP	50% D/P	12 mos.	36 mos.	60 mos.
GL Diesel M/T	611,000	305,000	26,383	10,371	7,355
GLX Gas M/T	645,000	322,500	27,852	10,949	7,765
Diesel M/T	670,000	335,000	*27,917	11,373	8,066
GLS Gas M/T	705,000	352,500	30,442	11,967	8,487
Gas A/T	740,000	370,000	31,954	12,561	8,908
GLS Diesel M/T	720,000	360,000	31,090	12,222	8,668
Super Sport Diesel M/T	770,000	385,000	*32,083	13,071	9,270
Super Sport Gas M/T	750,000	375,000	*31,250	12,731	9,029
Gas A/T	790,000	395,000	*32,917	13,410	9,511

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US soldiers venture near bandits' hideout

From page A1

taking as they bring the US-led war on terrorism to Western Mindanao.

The US soldiers, armed with M-4 carbines, surveyed a helicopter landing area at the camp. They later ate rice, eggs and corned beef with more than 100 Filipino Marines who showed the Americans a 33-centimeter native machete used for combat.

The four Americans were among the first batch of a 160-strong Special Forces contingent involved in the Balikatan 02-1 training exercise aimed at wiping out the Abu Sayyaf, which has been linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network.

The elite US troops plan to go into combat zones to observe Filipino troops hunt down about 80 bandits, remnants of a ruthless 2,000-strong Abu Sayyaf force that has been hammered by a military offensive involving 5,000 soldiers.

Basilan Rep. Gerry Salapuddin said the bandits had split into small groups, indicating the "mistrust, disunity and discontentment among the Abu Sayyaf rank-and-file."

Salapuddin said the bandits were quarreling among themselves over the ransom payments they had collected, adding the military should no longer have a hard time finishing them off.

Night patrols

Even so, the US Special Forces troops are planning to mount night air patrols over Basilan to track down the bandits who are holding captive an American missionary couple and a Filipino nurse.

A spokesperson for the US forces, Air Force M/Sgt. Michael Farris, told newsmen in Zamboanga City that several giant MH-47 Chinook helicopters would be used in the joint operations because the Philippine military had no night-flying aircraft—a major handicap in pinning down the bandits in Basilan.

"As the airlift operation in Basilan continues, we expect to have an increase in night flight operations," Farris said. "These night flights do not indicate any special mission or clandestine operations."

"Night flying and the use of infrared goggles is one of the special skills that we want to share with our Armed Forces of the Philippines counterparts to provide them an aid in combating terrorism," he added.

Farris said the Chinooks would be flying at night "all over the area of operations" but would strive to avoid heavily populated areas.

The bandits reportedly move stealthily through the volcanic island mostly at night, dragging along their hostages with them and evading the Filipino troops hunting them.

"With the use of certain types of equipment and night vision devices, the aircrew can operate in any environment in all types of terrain and at low altitudes," he said.

US forces said the Chinooks included an MH-47E type that "could conduct covert and overt infiltration, exfiltration, air assault, air supply and sling operation over a wide range of environmental conditions" as well as combat search and rescue missions.

Farris said a special operations aviation regiment would be flying the reconfigured Chinooks.

The Edwin Andrews Air Base in Zamboanga City and the Mactan Air Base in Cebu City will be hosting all of the US air assets during the war games, which are scheduled to last until June.

First encounter

Thirty commandos of the US Green Berets arrived in Basilan on Sunday, bringing to 51 the number of US soldiers on the island. The US troops are staying at the Philippine Army Brigade headquarters in Tabiawan, about 10 km outside the provincial capital of Isabela.

The US soldiers' first encounter with the Basilan folk in Isabela on Sunday went off smoothly.

Shortly after Chinook helicopters took the first batch of Special Forces to Tabiawan, three vans carrying US and Filipino soldiers unexpectedly rolled into the town center where they inspected a sports field for use as a possible landing strip.

The Americans, in camouflage uniform, wore bulletproof vests, and carried assault rifles and mini-machine guns.

The town stirred. Housewives, teenagers and children streamed out of their houses and gawked at the strangers. The US soldiers smiled broadly and let the children walk alongside them.

A young man taunted the Americans: "Bin Laden is here." No one among the armed strangers apparently heard, or if they did, they let it pass.

Their inspection over, the Americans got into the vans and headed back to camp. One soldier lifted his arms and smiled at the crowd.

The crowd, made up of Christians and Muslims, waved back.

On Monday, the US Special Forces troops again ventured out of their base in Tabiawan to give medical help to residents.

The US presence lifted the spirits of the Isabela folks who, apart from enduring kidnappings, had to avoid stray mortars from the Abu Sayyaf.

"We don't have any sinister plan here. We're here to help," Lt. Col. David Maxwell, head of the US contingent, said of scattered protests over the American presence.

The serious intent of the US mission, however, was underscored by the ever-present M-4 carbines that the US soldiers carried with them everywhere.

The visitors yesterday joined the Filipino soldiers in their daily flag ceremony, singing the national anthem and brigade song while American troops on all-terrain vehicles, with a Filipino soldier riding behind, patrolled the perimeter of the Tabiawan camp.

Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio, Filipino co-director of the training exercise, said the American soldiers were also getting along fine with their Filipino counterparts. ***Reports from AP, AFP, Martin P. Marfil in Manila, and Rolly San Juan, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

(Un)covering the Abu Sayyaf

From page A1

Andang, alias Robot, Mujib Susukan, Nadzmie Saabdulla or Global and Abu Pula Jumdail—with the newly formed government panel of negotiators headed by Robert Aventajado.

With the former presidential adviser were former Libyan Ambassador Rajab Azzarouq, Dr. Parouk Hussin and former Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan.

As the panel conferred with the Abu Sayyaf leaders, their followers set upon the unfortunate members of the media and terrorized them into surrendering anything and everything that caught the fancy of the so-called Al-Harakatul Islamiya.

The journalists returned to town without their tape recorders, cameras, cell phones, watches, sunglasses, field vests, shoes, caps, bags and, of course, money, but with a common conclusion: the Abu Sayyaf were nothing but a gang of shameless cutthroats.

That was only the beginning. Next followed the "entrance fee," which was anywhere from $1,000 to $2,000 for every interview with either the commanders or the hostages, plus a number of sacks of rice "for the hostages." There were only 21 hostages; but there were about a thousand gunmen guarding them, who had to be fed at least three times a day.

Then there were the "exit fees" demanded by the followers who would waylay the journalist on his way back and seize items like cameras and tape recorders, giving him no choice but to "ransom" these precious tools of his profession with money and personal effects, or all his efforts would be for naught.

And of course, hovering over everyone's head at all times was the clear and present danger of being abducted or, as in the case of three French TV journalists, of being detained indefinitely.

After that incident when 10 foreign journalists, mostly Germans, were detained for 12 hours and released only after they paid an exit fee of $25,000, the foreign media were ordered to leave town for their own safety, and the remaining locals were advised not to venture outside the town's perimeters.

Extra skills

That was when, in addition to the already stiff competition especially among the wire news agencies, the correspondents had to devise unconventional means to get their stories.

Ingenuity, creativity, and in some cases, even deviousness, were added to the standard skills of the journalists. "Assets" had to be cultivated with cash and gifts, news sources staked out, and always, one had to remember to cup the hand over the mouth when reporting on a cell phone, beyond earshot of colleagues.

"If this is how it is, I don't want any part of it," a young person observing the goings-on declared, with the conviction of the uninitiated. But as expected, she is now on her second year in Mass Communication.

All these could be accepted and forgivable in the context of journalism ethics, considering the unique circumstances under which the media covering the Abu Sayyaf and the hostage situation had to operate, while trying to conform to the demands of speed and accuracy.

Worth dying for?

But there were "methods" which some had to resort to, that seriously challenged not only the "morality" of the profession, but their own sense of values as well.

Restricted from going to Abu Sayyaf territory, especially inside camps where hostages were kept, and considering the high risks to life and limb such daring entailed, "no story is worth dying for" became the collective mantra, declared more as defense mechanism, rather than as article of faith.

This of course posed a dilemma, because the fact of a journalist's life is he has to get the story. The situation was especially difficult for television and news photographers, whose story could not exist without footage or frame.

In the meantime, the bandits themselves had learned well the "value" of the news story in terms of hard cash—dollars or its equivalent in pesos. They had even drawn up a price list: interviews, from $500 (for print) to $2,000 (including video footage); $100 for each roll of stills. Stiff as these prices already were, the journalists still had to contend with the usual "something for the boys" in the form of entrance and exit fees.

Enterprise

This was when enterprising individuals suddenly sprouted out of the woodwork. Enjoying access to the Abu Sayyaf way of consanguinity or mutually beneficial alliances, they offered their services in taking those precious footage and photos, and taping interviews for print journalists, at a price, although still high, that was more affordable and with no risks to the reporter.

Understanding each other's dilemma, and with the traditional empathy that journalists have for colleagues despite the equally traditional fierce competition among them, the reporters and correspondents seemed to have tacitly entered into a vow of silence on the practice of "buying" films, footage and information.

It had become the norm.

Still, the question remained: How did this come about? By what unfortunate circumstance was this sorry scheme of things imposed on a group of legitimate journalists by a band of mostly unschooled bandits?

"Why are you doing this to us? Why are you robbing us?" asked a shocked photographer of an international media outfit when he was armlocked by two bandits in full view of colleagues and brought into a room of a schoolhouse.

There, as he told the INQUIRER, "they pounced on me like a pack of wolves" and divested him of everything, including his Caterpillar shoes, which were replaced with a pair of worn-out, mismatched rubber slippers.

"You can easily buy these things," he was told in Tagalog. "You people earn much. We are very poor. We cannot afford to buy them, not like you."

Not even his denials of this perception spared his expensive watch, priceless to him because he bought it with his first paycheck, from being taken off his wrist.

TV crew case

Sometime after this incident, the interpreter for a foreign television crew posed this same question to the leader of a group of 12 gunmen who flagged down their vehicle as they were negotiating a bridge in Talipao on the return trip after interviewing some hostages.

The bandits demanded an exit fee of P10,000 from the two-man crew, or else they would have to leave the video camera that cost anywhere from P2-3 million, not to mention the cost of the footage still inside.

To foreign journalists, that amount was not much, but the fact was at that moment, the two did not have enough cash between them even for a bottle of mineral water. Earlier in the day, their wallets had been cleaned out by traditional demands for the "entrance fee," apart from what had been previously agreed upon, and the incredibly exorbitant cost of transportation. They had already paid a total of P18,000 going to and from an area roughly 20 km from the town of Jolo, which should be a story by itself.

Worse, having covered conflict situations all over the world, including the war in Bosnia, the two were not easy to scare and adamantly refused to give in, as if unaware of the potential danger to their lives. They had never experienced anything like this, they said, visibly irritated.

Impasse

It was an impasse; it was getting dark and they were tired, hungry, and very thirsty.

Why are you doing this, the interpreter asked the apparently stoned leader, who turned out to be a nephew of Commander Robot. He told them that the two were just "working people," and their company was not even going to reimburse the huge amount they had already shelled out just to get the interview.

"Who are you fooling?" the leader retorted. "Just because we are ignorant you think we are stupid. We know how much Arlyn (de la Cruz) was paid. What did we get from that? Nothing!"

Not content with that, he went on to harangue them on the way media were just "using" them, at the same time issuing a grim reminder: "Your news is with us. If you do not come, you have no news."

De la Cruz was the first journalist to get a videotaped interview of the Sipadan hostages, for which she was reportedly paid thousands of dollars by a foreign news agency.

For her, that interview was a sensational scoop, but as everyone noted, De la Cruz never again returned to Jolo all throughout the long drawn-out hostage crisis.

But for those who covered the Sipadan hostage drama and the Abu Sayyaf, that famous first interview had irrevocably set the terms for the rest of the coverage, terms that were to cause them many miseries.

US urged to curb possible flood of Afghan weapons

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The Southern Command yesterday urged the United States to stem a possible flood of al-Qaida weapons from Afghanistan into Mindanao, which has been wracked by decades of Moro separatist insurgencies.

Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Diaz, Southcom deputy commander, relayed the message to visiting US Republican Congressman Jim Gibbons, chair of the US House subcommittee on human intelligence, analysis and counter-intelligence.

Gibbons, who represents Nevada, is checking on the deployment of hundreds of American troops in the country for the RP-US military training exercise aimed at wiping out the Abu Sayyaf bandits.

During Gibbons' meeting with Southcom officers and local officials, concerns were raised that firearms in Afghanistan could find their way into Western Mindanao, the main area of operation of the Abu Sayyaf that has been linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network.

Diaz recommended that "there should be stricter controls of arms in Afghanistan going out and Congressman Gibbons said that is a very good recommendation and he would also take it up with the (US) government," Zamboanga City Rep. Celso Lobregat told reporters.

Gibbons agreed that "there might be a proliferation of these arms to other countries, including the Philippines," Lobregat said, adding that Taliban fighters on the run might also try to sneak into Mindanao.

Such concerns were stoked by the arrest last month of Fathur Rohamn al-Ghozi, an Indonesian who allegedly admitted during interrogation that he was a key member of the Jemaah Islamiyah militant group.

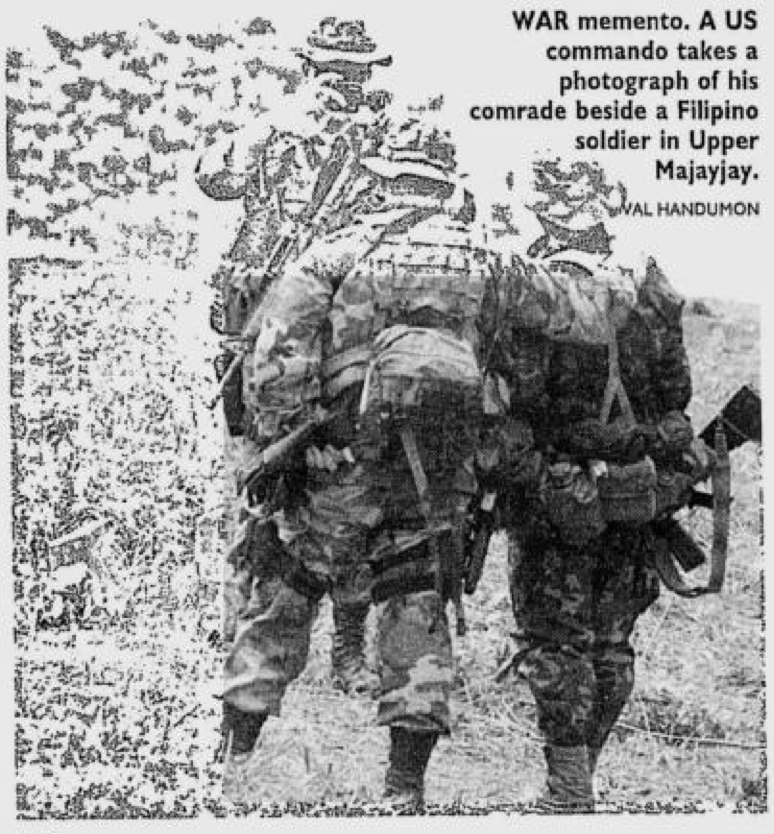
The organization is believed to also have direct links with the al-Qaida network.

Al-Ghozi allegedly helped plot and carry out a spate of deadly bombings in Manila that killed more than a dozen in December 2000.

Al-Ghozi also reportedly trained bomb experts of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which is now negotiating peace with the government.

While the MILF has said it does not have ideological links with the Abu Sayyaf, the local military has accused it of hiding the ruthless bandits in its camps.

Government forces are restricted from entering MILF camps as part of the ceasefire agreement forged between the rebel group and Manila. *AFP*



WAR memento. A US commando takes a photograph of his comrade beside a Filipino soldier in Upper Majayjay.

VAL HANDUMON

Revenge one . . .

From page A1

tal bandit group has affected lives of ordinary people in Basilan.

Yesterday, Abrenica returned to duty from vacation to find the island-province abuzz with US troops, ready to lend a hand in his personal battle against the Abu Sayyaf.

It is welcome news to the 27-year-old soldier.

Serious problem

Militancy in certain parts of Mindanao "is a serious problem," US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Robert Fitts admitted.

The hostage crisis "presents to the Philippine and American military a very convenient way to train the Philippine military in some of the tactics that might be helpful in the larger effort," he said.

But not all of Basilan's mainly Moro population share this view.

Parouk Hussin, governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao that includes Basilan, noted the "apprehension" of many of his constituents over the role of the US soldiers.

But Basilan Governor Wahab Akbar, a former Moro rebel described the bandits as "animals," and insisted that his people were "solidly behind" the joint military exercises.

Occupying an area about the size of Singapore, the island-province is among the poorest areas in the country.

"We welcome them (Americans), but let me courteously remind them not to abuse the hospitality of our people," said Basilan Rep. Gerry Salapuddin.

"Most people here understand that we're here for the right reasons," said a US Special Forces operative who called himself "Major Sam".

Lt. Col. David Maxwell said the Americans had taken took "cultural sensitivity" lessons beforehand, and were told that public shows of affection like men and women holding hands were frowned upon.

Former hostages

During the weekend, President Macapagal-Arroyo presented four former Abu Sayyaf kidnap victims from Basilan on her weekly program to show that they supported her move to enlist US help.

She introduced Rosebert Ajon and his wife Lydda, both teachers from Sinangkapan, Tuburan, and nurse Reina Malonzo and midwife Sheila Tabunyag from the Dr. Torres Hospital in Lamitan.

The Ajons were abducted on the same day as Abrenica's girlfriend Marissa. With Marissa, they escaped during the encounter. The firefight wounded Lydda, however; her hand was eventually amputated.

Rosebert said he and other teachers could not work normally while the bandits roamed the island.

"I can't explain how evil they are. Because if they're not evil, why would they abduct us? We did not do them any harm," he said.

Lydda said those against the Balikatan exercises did not know how the Abu Sayyaf works.

"They did not experience what we experienced. They did not lose their hand. They were not shot at. I nearly died. But now I'm in front of the President and I support the Balikatan with my whole heart," she said.

Sheila and Reina and two nurses were taken hostage last June 2, when the bandits holed up at the Lamitan hospital with their hostages abducted from Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan. They later escaped, but nurse Edeborah Yap remains in captivity.

"Things are still hard for us. We're still afraid because we still see some Abu Sayyaf men around town," Reina told the President.

Sheila said she continued to see Abu Sayyaf bandits everyday.

When Ms Macapagal asked them if they had reported the information to the authorities, Sheila said they had not because they were afraid. ***AFP, with a report from Dona Pazzibugan***

Palace sees new era in RP-US relations

From page A1

02-1, a joint military exercise in Mindanao aimed at crushing Abu Sayyaf bandits.

"The Balikatan 02-1 joint training exercise marks a new, historic phase in Philippine-US relations, which had cooled down after the nation decided to end in 1991 the presence of American military bases in our territory," Tiglao said in a statement.

He said the exercise "inadvertently could even be a model for US-Philippine relations in the 21st century."

As for those who continue to oppose the presence of American military forces in the country, Tiglao only had scorn for them.

"It is only our own reactionaries or guardians of the status quo—their minds trapped in or unwilling to get out of the long-gone era of American overseas intervention—who refuse to see that there is such a thing as history," Tiglao said, without naming anyone in particular.

He issued the statement a week after opponents of Balikatan launched the "Gathering for Peace" at the Ellinwood Church in Malate, Manila.

One of the speakers at the meeting said he was glad to see some activists and members of the First Quarter Storm.

"But I don't see someone. I hope Bobi Tiglao comes to his senses," he said, prompting the audience to break into applause and shouting.

In a previous press briefing, Tiglao recalled with some amount of fondness that he too once opposed American interventionism but he stressed that this stance had become passé.

He had paid his dues. He was imprisoned during the Marcos regime.

In his statement, Tiglao said US foreign policy "has evolved through the decades, seeking a balance between mainstream isolationism and global responsibility as a superpower."

Tiglao, a journalist before he was recruited as President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson, noted that "liberal American media has grown even more powerful than the so-called hawkish military-industrial complex of the 1950s."

Stubborn insistence

He lashed out at opponents of Balikatan 02-1 for their "stubborn insistence" that the exercise would pave the way for the return of American military facilities in the country.

Tiglao said "long gone is the era of military bases as an advantage for overseas warfare."

"It is obviously mobile carrier battle groups and hi-tech instruments of war that have become the crucial weapons for a superpower," he said.

"With the end of the Cold War more than a decade ago, our local communists need not automatically align themselves with the anti-American foreign policy of a now non-existent Soviet Union," Tiglao said.

He said the new phase of relations between the Philippines and the United States was ushered in by "the emergence of a congruence of interests: the need to end terrorism."

He said the United States would in fact "be risking the lives and limbs of its personnel" and would be spending about $7 million for Balikatan to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf.

Tiglao said Balikatan demonstrated the mutual respect and goodwill between the two countries.

"We respect their military might, their martial technology and their resources," he said.

"The US respects our sovereignty, our stand that our own soldiers will do the combat and that all they need is enhanced training and transfer of technology in fighting terrorism."

In a chance interview with Malacañang reporters, Ms Macapagal said that in her telephone conversation with President George W. Bush, the US leader told her twice that he "wants to help in order for us to achieve victory."

For her part, Ms Macapagal told Bush that the Philippine government "will try its best to recover the Burnhams."

She was referring to the American missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham who have been held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan since last May.

Long US stay for Estrada eyed

From page A1

Republic. It must not be allowed," the three said in a statement.

They noted that there had been sympathy for Estrada's illness while in detention. "But he is detained by his own acts against the Republic and illness is no excuse," they said. "To release him now will reward wrongdoing, foil justice, breed inequality and betray the Edsa aspiration for good governance."

Roco, De Villa and Osmeña issued the statement after they met yesterday afternoon. Roco said he later called up the President and told her about the meeting and the joint statement. "She seemed happy about it," he said.

Hours before, Ms Macapagal met with two anti-Estrada groups that tried to convince her to make a stand on Estrada's request to leave for the United States.

Breakfast

After a breakfast meeting with PlunderWatch and Estrada Resign Movement members, the President said she would not meddle with the Sandiganbayan, the anti-graft court trying Estrada for plunder and other crimes.

"I've said this several times: the decision is up to the Sandiganbayan. As President, I will be criticized whether I comment or not. So it's best that I do what I think is right, which is not to comment on something that an independent body will decide on," she said in a chance interview in the afternoon.

Members of Plunder Watch and Estrada Resign Movement told the President that the House and Senate resolutions gave the impression that her administration was supporting Estrada's request.

They pointed out that even administration senators and House Speaker Jose de Venecia were supporting the petition.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said Malacañang had no hand in the administration senators' support for the resolution. "If there was a signal from Malacañang, it didn't reach me," Drilon said at the Kapihan sa Manila Hotel.

Drilon said that he had already discussed the matter with Ms Macapagal, who told him that she would leave it to the anti-graft court.

"I did not sign because of the perception that the resolutions filed by both houses of Congress would influence the Sandiganbayan," Drilon said.

Former Senate President Jovito Salonga over the weekend castigated the legislators who signed the resolutions.

"We cannot possibly accommodate all accused criminals, similarly situated as Erap, to leave for abroad, without destroying our system of justice beyond repair," Salonga said.

In a privileged speech, Ocampo said the twin resolutions would prejudice the ongoing plunder trial, the first in the country's history.

"Their resolution, as Jovy Salonga avers, in fact constitutes outright interference in another branch of government in violation of the constitutional principle of separation of powers," Ocampo said.

Ocampo said the resolutions also tended to trivialize the crime of plunder and sent wrong signals that there was a double standard of justice.

"An elitist standard in favor of the rich and well-connected accused of serious crimes . . . and biased against the poor and weak who languish in jails without even the most basic necessities," Ocampo said.

Ocampo said granting Estrada his request would not promote political reconciliation. "National reconciliation and unity can only be based on justice."

Big fuss

Aquino, brother of slain opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., expressed surprise over the "big fuss" about the resolution.

"Erap is not convicted of any crime. He is merely charged with criminal cases," he said.

Aquino admitted that the plunder trial would be postponed if Estrada were allowed to leave for abroad. "Of course it (trial) will be delayed," he said.

Aquino denied that Estrada would go into exile once allowed to leave the country. "It's not part of the plan. He is not willing to be exiled. It has not entered his mind," he said.

But he admitted the possibility that Estrada would have a "prolonged treatment" if he were allowed to go abroad.

"If he gets medical treatment, it must be complete so that when he comes back problems (won't recur). You certainly don't want to be blamed if something bad happens to him," Aquino said.

He could not say how long Estrada would stay abroad, adding that it was up to the Sandiganbayan to set the duration of the treatment upon the advice of Estrada's doctors.

One of the resolution's authors, Rep. Prospero Nograles, earlier said that the treatment would last six months although the resolution did not set a time limit.

Asked what would happen if Estrada left the country and did not return, Aquino said that "Gloria will be very happy."

Aquino said Estrada's presence was a cause of irritation for Ms Macapagal especially when she was compared with him. He cited the criticism that Ms Macapagal lacked the charisma of Estrada.

Appeal

In a joint statement, Assistant Majority Leader Del de Guzman, Akbayan party-list Rep. Etta Rosales and Cibac party-list Rep. Jose Villanueva appealed to their fellow legislators to "put an end to actions that may be construed as undue interference (on) the autonomy of the Sandiganbayan."

De Guzman was quoted as saying that while he signed the resolution, he believed that any effort from the House to assist Estrada was futile because the Sandiganbayan was independent.

Rosales urged the members of Congress to stop meddling in judicial affairs.

Villanueva, who was sworn in only two weeks ago as party-list member of the House, had a mouthful to say about his fellow congressmen who signed the resolution.

"With due respect to my colleagues, I believe that we should just let the Sandiganbayan decide on the matter. Filing resolutions does not help the process of achieving political maturity," said Villanueva of the Citizens Battle Against Corruption (Cibac). He is the son of Jesus Is Lord founder Bro. Eddie Villanueva.

Villanueva, the youngest member of the House, said the signatories were only confusing the Filipinos.

But Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar, a member of the opposition, said she signed the resolution for humanitarian reasons.

"It's nothing personal. If your friend is sick, you help him," she said. Her husband, Sen. Manuel Villar, was reported to be among the five senators who did not sign the counterpart resolution in the Senate.

But Villar said her husband was likely to sign the resolution in the Senate. ***With a report from Dona Pazzibugan in Manila and Connie E. Fernandez, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Hi-tech dream home still a fridge too far

From page A1

on your video recorder at kick-off time.

Match saved.

This is a glimpse of the sleek technology-driven world that has been promised to us by scientists for some time now.

But that networked dream home is still several years away, according to industry experts.

"The integrated home is at least five years out," says Ian Keene of the European Telecommunications Group at Gartner Dataquest.

"A lot of these smart domestic appliances are likely to stay in showrooms, at least for the time being," he told a conference in London on the future of home networking.

The problems facing home network innovators are plenty.

As wireless firms and electronics companies scramble to grab a slice of the future, they develop their own network protocols that allow electronic devices to communicate with each other.

But many of these protocols are incompatible with one another and there is no industry standard.

The most widely used wireless network is 802.11 which has already spawned three variants—802.11a, 802.11b and 802.11g. And there are plenty of other protocols and acronyms to play with—Bluetooth, 10 base-T, HAVi, IEEE 1394, HomePNA and DECT.

"Six months ago, 802.11b was all everyone was talking about, then it was 802.11a, now it's 802.11g," said Bruce Beckloff of the British chip designer ARM Holdings.

Keene describes the jungle of competing protocols as "a nightmare" and fears the industry will emerge with "half a dozen different solutions, none of which will talk to one another".

Houses that are now being built, particularly in the United States, are fitted with wiring capable of delivering data at a speed and frequency that will make networking possible and practical.

But what about existing houses?

Georgian terraces in London, art-deco apartments in Berlin and Renaissance *palazzi* in Rome were not built with 21st century technology in mind.

Installing an Internet-responsive fridge is one thing. Ripping up the floorboards to lay the cables and wiring for it is quite another.

Industry experts also say it is unrealistic to expect consumers to get rid of their existing appliances overnight and adopt a home full of new gadgets—all connected to one another and controlled by a single PC or set-top box.

One partial solution to the problem of wiring up the home is to go wireless. You will still need to send data through a single gateway to a personal computer, but the PC could then pass it on to the house's electronic appliances via airwaves rather than through wires.

Few people doubt that some day, we will live in a world where our home appliances will listen to our PCs and obey the orders we shout at them down our mobile phones or over the Internet.

But for now at least, the leap to that brave new world appears to be just a fridge too far. *Reuters*

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1. All full-paying passengers (domestic and outbound Manila-Hong Kong flights) traveling from February 4 to July 4, 2002 are qualified to join the raffle.

2. Write your name, address, phone number, and affix your signature, flight date and flight number on the raffle coupon.

3. Drop the raffle coupon in drop boxes located at all Cebu Pacific Pre-Departure Areas, airport & organic ticket offices nationwide.

4. Deadline for submission of entries are as follows:

First Grand Draw:
On or before 12MN on April 28, 2002
Second Grand Draw:
On or before 12MN on July 4, 2002

5. Winners will be drawn on the following dates in the presence of a DTI representative:

First Grand Draw: May 6, 2002
Second Grand Draw: July 11, 2002

6. Raffle draws will be in Cebu Pacific's Airline Operations Center, Terminal I, Domestic Airport, Paranaque, Metro Manila at 5 PM.

7. Winners must present their claim stub and registered mail together with any two (2) of the following valid IDs with picture: School ID, Company ID, TIN Card, SSS Card, Credit Card or Passport.

See posters for more details.

Per DTI Permit No. 0179, series of 2002

CEBU CAGEFEST

Blu, Montaña set up best-of-3 clash

By Dennis U. Eroa

CEBU CITY—Hard-fighting Blu Detergent Kings ripped Hapee Toothpaste, 88-69, in a highly physical match to arrange an all-Manila finals in the First CBF-PBL Challenge Cup Sunday night at the New Cebu Coliseum here.

The Detergent Kings punished the Sparklers with a swirling offense and a sticky defense which ruined Hapee's explosive game and frustrated the sizeable Visayan crowd.

Earlier, Gary David, Jenkin Mesina and Mark Macapagal starred as Montaña struggled with an 85-76 overtime win over Granny Goose Tortillas.

Blu and Montaña dispute the title in a best-of-3 showdown. The Detergent Kings, now being coached by Leo Isaac, edged the Jewels, 67-66, during the eliminations and basketball-crazy fans can expect down-the-wire action in the championship series.

Making the finals, however, wasn't a breeze for both PBL teams. Blu won by a mile, but not after the Detergent Kings tasted the rough-housing tactics of Gabriel Maloloy-on, an ex-PBL player, who didn't click.

Coupled with the referees indecisiveness, Maloloy-on escaped with his dirty strategy before he was finally thrown out of the ballgame, 9:03 left in the fourth period, after elbowing Arnold Calo.

But Maloloy-on's unsportsmanlike conduct did not stop. Blue and the normally boisterous Cebuano crowd got incensed when Maloloy-on at the pretext of congratulating the Detergent Kings as the final buzzer sounded approached and punched Calo in the face.

A free-for-all nearly occurred but Isaac, team manager Silliman Sy and deputy Sam Cu controlled the Kings from retaliating.

Montaña and Granny Goose also endured spotty officiating which led to several stoppages and boiling temper.

"As far as Hapee is concerned, Maloloy-on is already out of the lineup," said CBF president Jack Huang, also a Hapee bigwig.

The league is also set to discuss the fate of Maloloy-on, who had given the CBF a black eye.

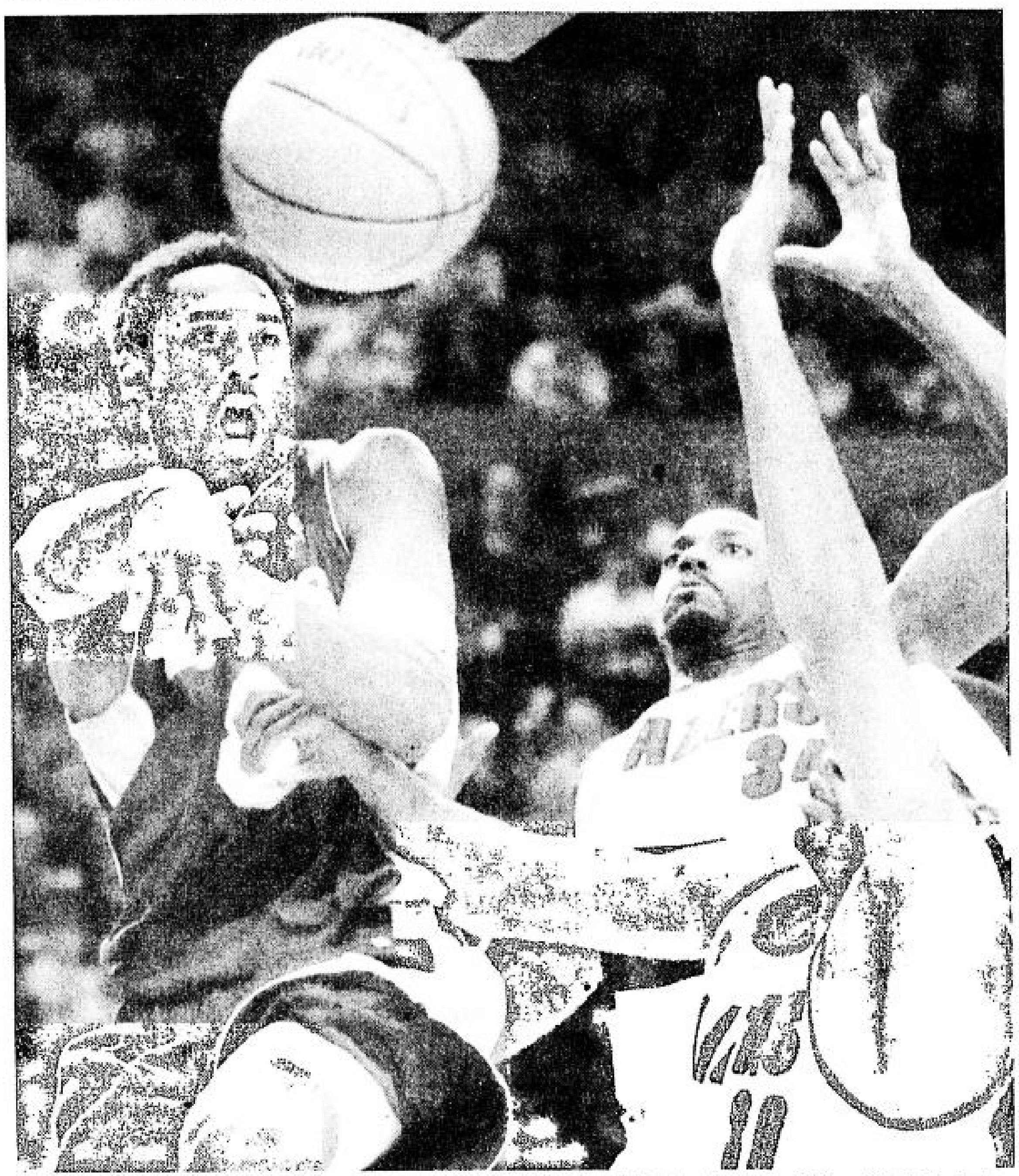
"When he (Maloloy-on) came to Manila and played, the PBL didn't treat him like what he had done in this game," said Isaac.

Scores:

BLU 88—Legaspi 19, Gatumbato 19, Codamon 13, Dimaunahan 8, Prior 7, Dela Cuesta 7, Calo 6, Gottenbos 5, Latoreno 4, Roldan 2.

HAPEE 69—Laygo 14, Bona 11, Raneses 11, Clar 9, Alvarado 5, David 5, Jabagat 5, Maloloy-on 4, Feronillo 3, Abellana 2, Garcia 1.

Quarters: 22-19, 44-37, 62-50, 88-69.



LA Lakers' Kobe Bryant (left) is forced to pass the ball as Portland's Rasheed Wallace (38) and Dale Davis try to double-team him. The Lakers lost, 105-111. AP

Blazers snap Lakers win run on road; Nets shine

PORTLAND, Oregon—Bonzi Wells scored 27 points and had 10 rebounds and Rasheed Wallace added 25 points as the Portland Trail Blazers defeated the Los Angeles Lakers, 111-106, in the NBA Sunday night.

The Lakers, playing without injured center Shaquille O'Neal, had their five-game road winning stopped. Kobe Bryant led Los Angeles with 28 points.

Ruben Patterson had 22 points and eight rebounds off the bench for the Blazers while Dale Davis had 12 points and 10 rebounds and Damon Stoudamire had a season-high 14 assists. Reserve Shawn Kemp once again provided a spark for the Blazers, scoring 10 points in 18 solid minutes.

Nets 98, Nuggets 77

Despite suffering from a sore arm, Kenyon Martin had three big dunks in a game-deciding third quarter that led the New Jersey Nets to a 98-77 victory over the Denver Nuggets.

Martin, whose bruised right forearm had him questionable until 30 minutes before gametime Sunday, had nine of his 15 points in the quarter that allowed New Jersey to avenge a loss to Denver on Nov. 25.

It marked the seventh time this season the Eastern Conference-leading Nets have beaten a team that beat them earlier this season.

Pacers 86, 76ers 76

In Indianapolis, Jalen Rose scored 12 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter and Jermaine O'Neal added 15 to lead the Indiana Pacers over the Philadelphia 76ers, who were playing without an injured Allen Iverson.

Iverson, the NBA's leading scorer, missed the game with a sprained right big toe. The 76ers also lost Derrick Coleman, ejected midway through the third quarter after getting into a shoving match with Reggie Miller.

COMPLETERESULTS

New Jersey 98, Denver 77; Milwaukee 91, Toronto 86; Memphis 92, Charlotte 78; Indiana 86, Philadelphia 76; Minnesota 93, Miami 80; Portland 111, L.A. Lakers 105; Utah 92, New York 89; Dallas 105, Phoenix 92; Seattle 126, Sacramento 116; Atlanta 100, Golden State 94. *AP*

Skiles out as Phoenix coach

PHOENIX—Scott Skiles stepped down as coach of the Phoenix Suns on Sunday and was replaced by assistant Frank Johnson.

Skiles made the announcement before the 105-92 loss by the Dallas Mavericks.

He had met with Suns president Bryan Colangelo on Saturday before the sides amicably agreed to part ways.

The coach was 116-79 in parts of three seasons with the Suns but just 5-8 in the postseason.

"Bryan and I came to an understanding it was time to do something different for the Suns," Skiles said. "You can analyze it a hundred thousand ways, but it hasn't worked.

"We've looked relatively uninspired out there. When that happens, you have to trace why that is."

Even Johnson made a reference to the Suns's lack of motivation.

"We need to change the attitude. We have to have an attitude change here," Johnson said.

"It's going to take time, and I understand that, but we've got to come together as a unit."

The Suns dropped three of their last four games under Skiles and have a 25-26 record.

They are one and a half games behind Seattle for the eighth and final Western Conference playoff spot. Phoenix has not missed the playoffs since 1988.

Skiles was regarded as a team-first point guard in his 10-year NBA career and still holds the record for assists in a game with 30.

Johnson, 43, becomes the Suns's fifth coach in the last seven seasons, following Paul Westphal, Cotton Fitzsimmons, Danny Ainge and Skiles.

Pacquiao heads Elorde awardees

INTERNATIONAL Boxing Federation superbantamweight champion Manny Pacquiao will lead the cast of heroes and lords of the ring who will be honored for their exploits in 2001 in the second edition of the Gabriel "Flash" Elorde Boxing Awards March 25 at the Hotel Intercontinental.

Pacquiao, who retained his title with a technical split draw with South American Agapito Sanchez last November, emerged as the strongest international champion from the Philippines to earn the Boxer of the Year Awards, the highest honor accorded by the prestigious Elorde Boxing Awards.

The Elorde Boxing Awards is an annual event launched last year and held annually by the clan of the late Elorde, one of only two Filipinos enshrined in the International Boxing Hall of Fame and in whose memory boxing's greatest accolade is awarded.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has been invited to present the Boxer of the Year Award.

Johnny Elorde, son of Da Flash and who is handling the preparations, said that major awards will also be given to other reigning international and Philippine champions and outstanding boxing personalities—best trainer, best judge, best referee, best matchmaker—as well as to the best fight and the most popular and exciting fighter of the year.

Also to be given citations and special awards during the Elorde Banquet of Champions are boxing personalities who have contributed to the development of professional boxing in the Philippines. "This is our way of giving recognitions to these outstanding men in boxing who have given much honor to our country," he added.

The traditional Elorde Boxing Awards Night-Banquet of Champions will coincide with the birth anniversary of Da Flash, the greatest Filipino boxer after the post-war era. Elorde captured the world junior lightweight crown over Harold Gomes in 1960, and successfully defended his title for unprecedented 10 times in an eight-year span.

Lewis may fight Tyson in June

LONDON— World heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis may face Mike Tyson in June, but finding a venue for what could be the richest fight in history continues to be a problem.

Lewis was due to meet Tyson in Las Vegas on April 6, but the bout was called off when Nevada officials refused the American a licence following the pair's infamous brawl at a New York news conference last month.

Tyson has been seeking a licence throughout the United States, and on Wednesday the Georgia Boxing Commission granted him one, drawing criticism from state governor Roy Barnes.

The Georgia Boxing Commission said on Sunday, however, that Tyson's management team had contacted them to say the bout would not take place in the state.

Earlier on Sunday, Lewis's business manager Adrian Ogun told the BBC that the world title fight may be rescheduled for June.

Bustamante, Andam advance

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates—The Philippines' Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Leonardo "Dodong" Andam scored easy wins against U.A.E. opponents on opening day of the First Fujairah International Billiard Tournament here Sunday.

Bustamante defeated Al Haji, 11-2, and Andam beat al Junibi, 11-6, to advance to the second day of the 9-ball meet in which 16 top players from several countries are competing for the unique prizes of gold and trophies.

The winner gets 1-kg. of gold and trophy, second place ½ kg. gold and trophy, and third and fourth places ¼ kg. of gold and trophy each.

Efren "Bata" Reyes headed the Puyat Sports team but is not competing in the tournament. He was invited to the tournament as special guest and will only perform trick shots and play in exhibition matches.

POST POSITION DRAW

Officials from the PCSO Committee on Races, under the supervision of PCSO vice chair and general manager Virgilio Angelo (seated fourth from left), recently conducted the official post position draw for the Feb. 24 PCSO First Gentleman's Silver Cup Race. Committee members present during the draw include (seated from left)Julie Aseo, Betsy Paruginog, Israel Estrella and Ma. Paz Magsalin, (standing from left) Manny Garcia, Diosdado Jimenez, Vicente Manalad, Jose Malang, Carlos Castillo, Carlo Mendez and Reis Pe. The official post positions of the entries is as follows: Staunch Ally (stall No. 1), Lyonnais (No. 2), My Preperido (No. 3), Wind Blown (No. 4), Batangas Entry (No. 5) and Charlemagne (No. 6)

Non-master chess slated

THE COUNTRY'S top-ranked players of non-master status and emerging chess talents will be trooping to Greenhills Chess Plaza for the Non-Masters Active Chess Showdown on March 10.

Pagcor and the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation jointly bankroll the seven-round Swiss system tournament with handsome cash awards for the five top performing players.

The tournament champion receives P5,000 plus trophy; second-placer gets P3,000 plus trophy; third-placer gets P2,000 plus trophy; fourth-placer gets P1,000 while the fifth best performer takes P500.

Invited to grace the 10 a.m. tournament's opening rites are key officials of Pagcor and HSBC.

For inquiries and other tournament details, please call Boy Rabe at 872-78-20.

It's Hernaez

SEVENTH seed Truman Hernaez outclassed No. 2 Randy Segarra in the seventh and final round to rule the February edition of the Metropolitan Chess Club Non-Master chess tournament held over the weekend at Greenhills Shopping Center.

Playing black, the 25-year-old Hernaez prevailed in the knight and pawn endgame and forced Segarra to resign after 45 moves of a Caro-Kann to boost his final tally of 6.5 points after seven rounds of play in this one-day event which attracted a total of 126 players.

WILLIAMS returns a shot to Henin during their final showdown. Williams won, 6-3, 5-7, 6-3. Inset, Williams shows her diamond-encrusted gold racket trophy. AP

Williams beats Henin, nears No. 1 ranking

ANTWERP, Belgium —World No. 2 Venus Williams beat Belgium's Justine Henin 6-3, 5-7, 6-3 Sunday to win the $ 585,000 WTA Diamond Games and move her closer to the No. 1 ranking held by fellow American Jennifer Capriati.

"For me and my family this is a dream come true," Williams said.

Williams, the top seed, needed more than 2 hours to beat Henin, who was seeded second and is ranked No. 9 in the world.

Williams started the match with a sweltering 182-kph (113-mph) ace on her first serve, but Henin answered with closely played balls to the net, setting the stage for an evenly matched volley-fest.

The diminutive Henin, while incapable of serving at the speed of her opponent, managed to get in two early aces to delight the 12,000-capacity crowd at the Antwerp Sportpaleis.

Among Henin's supporters were Crown Prince Philippe and injured world No. 5 Kim Clijsters.

In Doha, Qatar, top-seeded American Monica Seles relied on her impressive serve to beat fourth seed Tamarine Tanasugarn of Thailand 7-6 6-3 and win the Qatar Open on Sunday.

In Marseille, France, Sweden's Thomas Enqvist won the Marseille Open for the third time on Sunday when he came from behind to beat Nicolas Escude 6-7 6-3 6-1.

Manotoc fire still there, leads RP Open hopefuls

AGELESS Tommy Manotoc, always a contender when it comes to amateur golf, shot a five-over-par 77 yesterday at Villamor to lead the field in the battle for 10 slots staked in the Casino Filipino 87th Philippine Open.

Manotoc, a many-time low medalist of the fabled RP Open, went out with a 38 before coming home with a 39 to lead fellow amateurs Solomon Gines (78) and Jun Bernis (78) by one shot going to today's final 18 holes.

All the 53-year-old Manotoc, one of the country's most durable and reliable amateurs, has to do today is coast along to clinch one of 10 berths for outright entry into the Philippine Open organized by the National Golf Association of the Philippines.

Lyndon Barril, another amateur, was at 80 after a fat 42 coming home and then Japanese Toyoda Kunihiro was the best-placed pro at 81 in a tie with Ronnie Torrecampo, another amatuer.

Dave Hernandez had a front-nine 38 but struggled coming home with a 44 for 82, the same output of Bernard Villa and Korean Seong Ki Lee.

The Top 10 finishers after today will join Asia's Top 60 finishers in the Asian Tour to the Philippine Open on March 7-10 at Wack Wack East.

Also seeded into the Open, staking no less than P10 million in total prizes, are some of the country's top players, including defending champion Cassius Casas, Danny Zarate and Gerard Cantada.

A Pro-Am on March 6 will precede the tournament bankrolled principally by Pagcor through Casino Filipino and main presentor San Miguel Beer.

Mitsubishi is the official car of the event, now a part of the Davidoff Tour of the Asian PGA.

The other scorers:

83—Randy Garalde, John Choi, Antonio Victoria.

85—Juami Rocha, Takahashi Yukuhiro, Felix Fernando.

86—Chester Calpotura, Jojo Cruz, Roy Tolentino.

87—Bobby Celestino.

88—Jong Laput.

93—Tony Santos.

MANOTOC massages his weary foot as his flightmates do their thing during the Casino Filipino 87th Philippine Open qualifying yesterday. He leads the field with a 77 at Villamor.

JESS YUSON

Calpotura keys John Hay victory in Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—With Chester Calpotura leading the attack, host Camp John Hay Golf Club scooped up most of the major awards disputed by winning eight out of 11 in the well-attended 14th Corporate Cup golf tournament recently.

Calpotura tore his home course apart with rounds of 64 and 60 points, equivalent to 14-under-par in medal play. He won the overall individual title in lopsided fashion while leading his team to a similarly unchallenged romp in Group I.

Calpotura teamed up with Mars Garcia, Clyde Cabreros, Bong Mandapat and Mike Pearson to give John Hay A a 46-point win over CAP Philippines.

John Hay teams went three for five in team play and four of six in the individual category of the tourney sponsored by Camp John Hay Dev't. Corp., College Assurance Plan, Wilson Philippines, Le Souffle, Premier Wines and Spirits, Nestle Phils., and Smart.

Texas I (Mel Acuna, Lino Oballo, Joey Mactal, Jun Tatlonghari and Aris Sunio) and the Philippine Military Academy led by Gen. Rufo de Veyra prevented a John Hay sweep in the team battle by winning the seniors division and Group IV, respectively.

De Veyra was joined in his team by Col. Arsenio Arugay, Maj. Isiah Espino, Maj. Raul Tangco and Maj. Chet Valencerina.

Also winning for John Hay were Romy Tio, Jay Co, Rudy Locky, Herr Bautista and Caesar Valencerina in Group II and its ladies team composed of Cha Diciano, Leonor Corpuz, Gerrie Muller, Leny Cuyno and Nanette Filler in Group III.

Only Agoes Soelewah of Indonesia (seniors) and Col. Arsenio Arugay of PMA were the non-John Hay winners in the individual winners' roster.

Aside from Calpotura, John Hay also produced winners in Group I (Clyde Cabreros), Group II (Romy Tio) and group III (Leny Cuyno).

The winners were honored in a fun-filled awards ceremony at the John Hay clubhouse.

Frankie's golf

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

FRANKIE Miñoza owns 66 dogs. And counting. His 40 Labradors stay with him in his lovely mansion (Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon); the rest, which include Toy Pinchers and Dachshundes, are in his beach house in Cagayan de Oro City. I saw six of his Labradors during a recent dinner tendered by Frankie. The 34 others were in their quarters at the back of Frankie's house, daintily painted white (I immediately called Frankie's castle-like house "The White House"). Some of the guests might not be dog-lovers. Or were simply afraid of dogs.

"I have always been fascinated with dogs," Frankie began. "Without them, it seems like my life is not complete."

Two of his six Labradors without leash that night stood watch as I was having my dinner under moonlit skies. They were like actually guarding every move that I was doing.

"Can I share them my dinner?" I said.

"No, please," Frankie said. "I don't want them to be spoiled."

Their mouths agape were mere inches away from my plate. But never did anyone of them try to grab a bite—literally. Known as the friendliest breed of dog, the Labradors kept kissing my thighs—while I was eating, and after I was done. They alternated that with sliding their heads under my palms, as though coaxing me to comb their hair with my hands. I did. And, almost all the time that I was there, I stroked their heads. I enjoyed every minute of it.

"I can see that you also love dogs," Frankie said.

"Yes, I do," I said. "In fact, I have eight now in the house, including four puppies."

"Uh-oh," he said. "That's too few for a dog-lover like you. I'm sending you one."

What can I say?

Thanks. I'll name it golf.

■

Joaquin Sy, a PBA fan from Bacolod, called me up yesterday and asked: "Why did Coach Chot Reyes replace his import, Fred Williams, with a much shorter player like Jojo Manalo in the dying minutes of Sunday's game? As a result, his Coca Cola Tigers lost to Shell (90-82)."

FIRST WIN AFTER 8 YEARS

Mattiace shoots 68, captures Nissan Open

LOS ANGELES— American Len Mattiace has always had that burning desire to win. He's just never been able to put it all together for four rounds of golf.

But that all changed for the 34-year-old who carded a three-under-par 68 on Sunday to capture the $3.7 million Nissan Open for his first win in his eighth year on the PGA tour.

"I'm very excited," said Mattiace after his first victory in 220 PGA starts. "I want to win a lot. The burn is inside. It's still there."

The tournament came down to the last shot as Mattiace parred the 18th to finish at 15-under and beat fellow American Scott McCarron by one stroke.

It was reminiscent of last week's Buick Invitational where Jose Maria Olazabal won after J.L. Lewis three-putted the 18th.

2 seconds previously

Mattiace's best previous PGA finish was two seconds in 1999 and 1996.

He had a 72-hole 269 total at the revamped California course.

McCarron, who missed a six-foot putt for par on the par-four 18th had to settle for a bogey and an even-par 71 on the day to finish in a three-way tie for second.

South Africa's Rory Sabbatini and Brad Faxon were also 14-under.

Japan's Toru Taniguchi, who was in the hunt all week, shot an even-par 71 on Sunday to finish two strokes back of Mattiace at 13-under.

Sweden's Per-Ulrik Johansson, Chris DiMarco and Charles Howell tied for sixth at 12-under, while Spain's Olazabal shot a four-under 67 to finish five back of the leader.

Mattiace, who picked up 666,000 dollars for the win, was runner-up at the 1996 Buick Challenge and the 1999 Sony Open in Hawaii.

"I'm pleased with the way I hung in there," said Mattiace.

Mattiace, who turned pro in 1990, said at times he wondered if he was ever going to win.

"You see other guys win for the first time and then go on to have multiple wins.

"Sure there are times when you wonder... Other times when you feel you can touch it, smell it. It all came together this week."

Mattiace said the first time he thought he might have a chance at winning the tournament was Saturday after he holed an 80-foot putt on the first hole.

"When that stuff happens you think 'this is mine'. But it is foolish to think that way."

Mattiace said he quickly put away any thoughts of winning and tried to focus on the task at hand.

2 putts to win

His approach on 18 landed safely on the green and then he two-putted for the win.

The same could not be said for McCarron, who took home a 276,000 dollar runner-up cheque. His approach landed to the left of the green, giving him a tough putt from the fringe.

Englishman Lee Westwood shot a two-under 69 on Sunday to finish with an eight-under 276 total, while Canadian Glen Hnatiuk was six-under.

Australians Robert Allenby, the defending champ, and Bradley Hughes finished well back at three-under and one-under. *AFP*

MATTIACE: "The burn is inside." AP

Odi, Encabo prevail at Eagle Ridge

ROMEO Odi and Ramir Encabo bucked swirling winds to share top honors in the recent Wilson-sponsored monthly medal tournament at the sprawling Eagle Ridge Golf Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Odi scored an 81 to capture low gross honors while Encabo tallied a net 10-under 62 on a gross of 82 to clinch the low net award in the 18-hole stroke play with full handicap.

Other top performers of the event which drew 100 entries including jungolf sensation Jayvie Agojo were Carl Reyes, who placed second with a 65, Ambrosio de Luna (67) and Irineo Agojo (69).

Wilson Sports Philippines through its general manager Jun-Jun Plana donated prizes to the winners and the raffle. Eagle Ridge GM Buddy Resurreccion handed out the trophies to the top finishers.

Master derby today

MANDALUYONG Coliseum, venue of big-time cockfighting events, will present the 5th Ucap/Arnis Master 7-Cock Derby at 5 p.m. today featuring more than 60 thrilling fights. Derby sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo.

Well-known sportsman Raymond Velayo will host the two-day cockfest, a follow-up to the 4th Ucap 7-Cock Derby on Feb. 5 and 7 ruled by Sonny Lagon (Blue Blade JBB, 7 points).

Meanwhile, the Luzon Gamecock Breeders Association (LGBA) 6-Cock Derby will also be held at Mandaluyong Coliseum on Feb. 26 and Feb. 28.

For other inquiries, call 531-40003, 531-4005, 534-4110 and 535-2341.

Dayrit expands POC help to Asiad athletes

THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee has expanded its direct involvement in the preparation and training of deserving athletes for the Asian Games in Busan, South Korea on Sept. 29-Oct. 14 in a bid to enhance the country's medal chances.

Under the new program which was approved yesterday by the POC executive board, selected athletes of national sports associations (NSAs) which have a probable chance of qualifying for the Busan Asiad may submit their recommendation for subsidy to any acceptable international competition.

POC president Celso L. Dayrit explained, however, that the request is subject to the approval of the POC executive board, giving consideration to the possible contribution of such exposure to the development of the athlete for the coming Asiad.

This new program will be funded solely by the POC.

Only recently, the POC announced its assistance to nine athletes from six Olympic sports under the International Olympic Solidarity Program.

These athletes and their respective sports are Purita Joy Marino, archery; John Baylon, judo; Rasheya Jasmin Luis, shooting; Eduardo Buenavista, John Lozada and Cristabel Martex, athletics; Walbert Mendoza, fencing; and Roberto Cruz and Veronica Domingo, taekwondo.

Other NSAs whose sports are included in the Busan Games outside of these six which are being supported by the Olympic Solidarity may submit their applications for training subsidy.

This new program, according to Dayrit, emphasizes the POC's commitment in assisting NSAs in their task to develop athletes that could bring glory and honor to the country.

DAYRIT

SPORTS
Editor Al S. Mendoza ◎ Assistant Editor Edwin M. Villanueva

Graf fails to break old mark

BIRMINGHAM, England— Austrian Stephanie Graf failed in her bid to break the 14-year-old indoor world 800 meters record on Sunday, but she did beat arch-rival Maria Mutola. Graf, the Olympic and world silver medalist, was one of a number of athletes with their sights on the record books, but the Birmingham grand prix meeting, which has witnessed four world best marks in the past three years, failed to produce any fireworks this time. *AP*

SPORTS ON TV Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: US NCAA – Boston College vs St. John's at 8 a.m. (r – 5 p.m.), Iowa State vs Kansas at 10 a.m. (r - midnight), New Mexico vs Utah at 1 p.m. on ESPN

GOLF: Golfglobe 2002 at 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

PGA Nissan Open, Second Round at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

PBA SAMSUNG CUP

P'foods faces Gin, eyes share of lead

TEAMS	W	L
Red Bull	2	0
Alaska	1	0
Purefoods	1	0
Selecta-RP	1	0
Hapee-RP	1	0
Shell	1	1
Coke	1	1
San Miguel	0	1
Talk N Text	0	1
Ginebra	0	1
Sta. Lucia	0	1
FedEx	0	2

GAME TODAY (Philsports)
6p.m.—Ginebra vs Purefoods

By June Navarro

PUREFOODS aims for a share of the lead with Batang Red Bull when the Hotdogs collide against the Barangay Ginebra Kings today in the PBA Samsung Governors Cup at the Philsports Arena.

Getting big lifts from veterans Ronnie Magsanoc and Alvin Patrimonio, the Hotdogs outplayed the Talk N Text Phone Pals, 92-89, in their opener last week.

A resemblance of that feat wouldn't be far-fetched in the 6 p.m. thriller as the Hotdogs are all fired up with the fresh inputs of interim coach Ryan Gregorio.

A victory for the Hotdogs enables them to share the top spot with the Thunder at 2-0.

Gregorio, Eric Altamirano's deputy at Purefoods, used his vast skills in situations that call for drastic measures in outwitting American coach Bill Bayno of Talk N Text.

"At that time, we really don't have anything special against Bayno. In fact, we didn't even talk about him. Against Ginebra, it will again be situational," said Gregorio, a former UP Maroon.

Gregorio was forced to take up the challenge after Altamirano lent his coaching expertise to the national training pool.

Smarting from a 68-63 loss during their debut against the Alaska Aces, the Kings hope to avoid another end-game collapse to prevent a plunge at the cellar with Federal Express (0-2).

Bubba Wells and Jarrod Gee must quickly find an answer against the Hotdogs' dynamic imports—Derrick Brown and Leonard White.

Wells and Gee should get help from Jun Limpot, Vergel Meneses, Mark Caguioa, Bal David and Ronald Magtulis to do the Hotdogs in.

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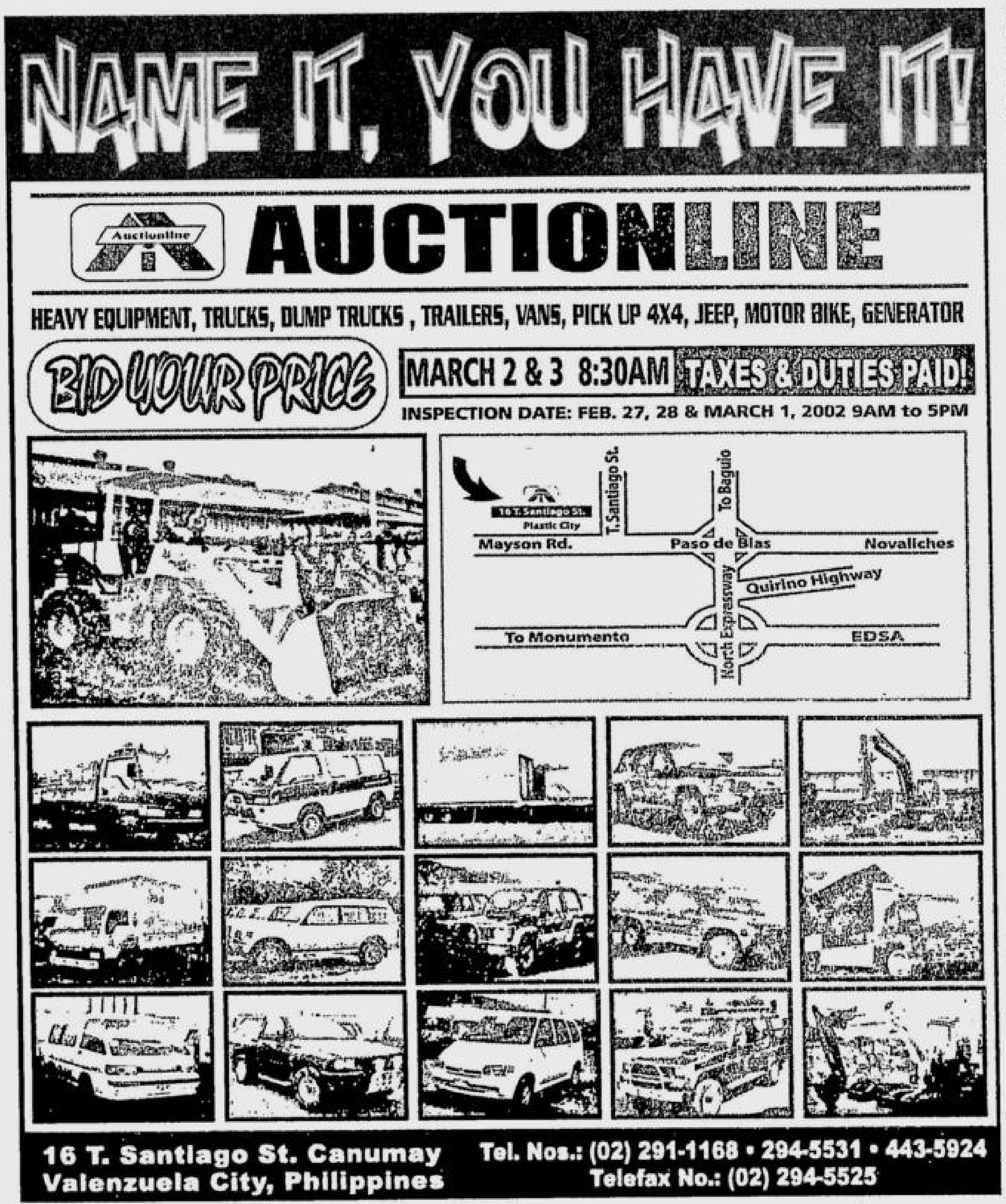
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2 SMB imports fined

THE BUREAU of Immigration slapped fines yesterday on two more American imports seeing action in the PBA Governors Cup for playing without the required work permits.

Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo said Lamonth Strothers and Keith Hill, both imports of San Miguel Beer, were fined P10,000 each for playing against Selecta on Feb. 14 even before their work permits were approved by the bureau.

Domingo said it was only on Feb. 15 that her office approved San Miguel's application for special work permits for Strothers and Hill.

Immigration officer Ferdinand Arbas, one of Domingo's technical staff, said the administrative fine was imposed because of San Miguel's failure to submit on time documentary requirements in support of its application for a work permit.

Arbas disclosed that approval of San Miguel's application for work permit was delayed because the documents it submitted did not include the company's articles of incorporation and registration papers filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The said documents are required pursuant to a memorandum of agreement signed between the BI and PBA on June 4, 2001 which provides for the guidelines on issuing work permits to foreigners playing in the league, Arbas said.

Strothers and Hill were, however, were fortunate because they were not arrested by immigration agents for violating Philippine immigration laws.

It will be recalled that on Feb. 12, that FedEx imports Rhodrick Rhodes and Jermaine Walker were also fined P20,000 for failure to secure work permits before they debuted against Pop Cola on Feb. 10.

The application for work permits of FedEx players Jermaine Sherard Walker and Rhoderick Rodes was also delayed because of the company's failure to submit its income tax returns and audited financial statements to the bureau.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1990, Robert Pactolerin scored a two-stroke victory to win the 75th Philippine Open at Wack Wack. Also today in 1989, Froilan R. Bernardo steered Royal Marina to a winning time of 1:46 and 3/5 to rule the junior division title in the Amethyst Stakes race at Sta. Ana Park.

BAYNO watches intently from the bench during Talk N Text's game against Purefoods last Saturday. Purefoods won, 92-89. ROMY HOMILLADA

BCAP hits labor dep't inaction on Bayno case

By June Navarro

CHITO Narvasa, president of the 500-strong Basketball Coaches Association of the Philippines, yesterday said the Department of Labor and Employment has refused to explain the grounds for issuing a work permit to American coach Bill Bayno of Talk N Text.

Narvasa said he had seen a copy of Bayno's DOLE clearance but the labor department rejected the BCAP's plea for an explanation.

"They (DOLE officials) don't want to show the basis for giving out the permit to Bayno. Probably they are not aware of the Supreme Court ruling applied on a similar case," said Narvasa.

Last Saturday night, Talk N Text defied a 1991 SC order prohibiting foreigners to coach any PBA squad by consenting Bayno to call the shots for the Phone Pals.

The Phone Pals lost, 92-89, against the Hotdogs but that won't stop the BCAP from invoking the law, according to Narvasa.

"We will work these things out as quietly as possible. A restraining order on Bayno is possible but we are not closing the door to any form of compromise," said Narvasa.

"I hope Talk N Text officials honor the law and adopt the same formula used by San Miguel Beer on Ron Jacobs in 1998," he added.

San Miguel relegated Jacobs, an American, from head coach to consultant, allowing Jong Uichico to coach the team. Uichico then proved his worth by steering the Beermen to six titles from 1999-2001.

"We want to see the law implemented. We don't have a personal grudge against Bayno or Talk N Text but the process should be legal," said Narvasa.

Narvasa added that a compromise between the BCAP and Talk N Text would be a better alternative than hauling the case to court.

All-Kapampangan roster for Pampanga in MBA

By Roy Luarca

PAMPANGA, adhering to the Metropolitan Basketball Association's original thrust of grassroots development, will be fielding a team of true blue Kapampangans when it returns to the league this year.

Team manager Allan Trinidad said they made sure all the players, the coaching staff and the support staff of the Pampanga Stars have Kapampangan blood.

Thus far, 10 players have been signed up with a Fil-Am scheduled to arrive March 5 to bolster the roster of Pampanga, the MBA inaugural champion in 1998, for the MBA first conference starting on April.

Tinidad said already signed up were playing coach Ato Agustin (5-foot-11), Dave Bautista (6-4), Willy Mejia (6-6), Roland Pascual (6-4), Billy Bansil (6-4), Richie Melencio (6-1), Ariel Garcia (6-0), Eric Gascon (6-3), Rolof Liangco (6-2) and Egay Ignacio (6-5).

Planing in from San Francisco, California is 6-foot-5 Cris Guinto Jr., whose parents came from Masantol. The 24-year-old Guinto is reportedly a 230-pound bruiser, who used to play with pros Nic Belasco and Robert Duat.

As planned, the rest of the 14-man lineup is likely to come from young sensations in the province or veterans with Kapampangan blood.

"With this All-Kapampangan lineup, the crowd will surely be back," said Trinidad. "We want to bring back the spirit of the 1998 season."

Trinidad bared that the team had been training for three weeks and that the team management, with help from the provincial government, has refurbished the Bren Guiao Sports Complex Gym which will serve as its home.

Pangasinan tryouts

MORE than 70 players attended the first day of tryouts for the Pangasinan team in the MBA yesterday at the Tanduay Gym in Quiapo, Manila.

Coach Lawrence Chongson said, however, he cut the field to just 28, about 12 of them Fil-Ams, in the continuation of tryouts at 1 p.m. today and tomorrow.

METRO

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

Wholesale phone theft

TWO men in security guard uniform entered the Globe Telecom shop at Park Square 1 on Pasay Road in Makati Sunday morning, pretended to borrow the .38 pistol of guard Romulo de Asis and then pointed it at him. The gunman proceeded to take cell phones and accessories worth hundreds of thousands while his cohort acted as lookout, police said.

Alcuin Papa

Taguig mayor, too, says no to casino

By Christian V. Esguerra

TAGUIG Mayor Sigfrido Tinga yesterday assured protesting church groups that he does not favor the construction of a hotel-casino in the town's Global City.

"Personally, I don't like it," the mayor said a day after about 80 church organizations threatened to stage mass actions to block the controversial plan.

But Tinga refused to take the protesters' challenge for him to write a letter to the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. categorically stating his opposition to the casino plan.

Instead, the mayor slammed protesters for "creating an issue when there is none." He refused to elaborate on his statement.

The church groups said the Pagcor letter would once and for all douse fears that the local government is in favor of the construction of a hotel-casino.

A "mysterious" municipal resolution supposedly authorizing the construction of a hotel-casino surfaced recently, fueling the fears of church leaders, according to Archie de Villa, head of the Alliance of God's Ambassadors and Pastors (Agap).

He said the resolution did not carry the name of its sponsor.

Agap, an alliance of about 80 church organizations, and other cause-oriented groups have expressed strong opposition to the construction of a hotel-casino, reportedly on a 5.1-hectare property Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. donated to Taguig.

The protesters said an ordinance called "Moral Uprightness Program of Taguig 2001" bans the "operation or entry of any legal gambling casino or government-controlled casinos" in Taguig.

Arab tourist accuses 6 policemen of extortion

By Philip C. Tubeza

ABDULRAHMAN H. Alhumedhin, of Saudi Arabia, accused six policemen, including the chief of a Manila community precinct and four rookies, of trying to rob him of $1,500 in Ermita, Manila.

Alhumedhin, 37, who is staying at the Pan Pacific Hotel on Adriatico Street in Ermita, said six policemen from the Sta. Monica police community precinct, led by its chief, Senior Insp. Linsley Pillejera, and a civilian tried to extort money from him.

Four of the police suspects were identified as PO1 Oliver Aluning, 27; PO1 Roger Romualdo, 27; PO1 Eduardo Robles, 32, and P01 Edwin Jurilla. Only Jurilla is with the Ermita police station. The three others are from Region II.

Investigators are still trying to determine the identity of the other policeman. The civilian was identified as security guard Danilo B. Guidoc, 30, of Novaliches, Quezon City.

"The four rookie policemen have been disarmed. They're still young but (are) already getting involved in these things," said Supt. Gerry Agunod, Western Police District spokesperson.

He said that WPD director Chief Supt. Nicolas Pasinos ordered the summary dismissal of the four rookie policemen from the police force.

Supt. Manolo Martinez, Ermita police station chief, said Pillejera is under investigation for "command responsibility."

Investigator SPO4 Edgar A. Reyes said the attempted theft happened about 9 p.m. on Sunday along Adriatico Street in Ermita.

Police said Alhumedhin had just boarded a taxi when police mobile patrol car 3125 blocked the taxi's path. Aluning, Romualdo and Jurilla, who were allegedly on board the patrol car, accused Alhumedhin of possessing a stick of marijuana and ordered the driver to bring Alhumedhin to the Sta. Monica PCP.

There, the six policemen allegedly told him he might be imprisoned for life if he were convicted of possession of marijuana. They also told him they might set him free if he gave them $1,500. Guidoc and Aluning allegedly escorted him to look for a money changer's shop to cash Alhumedhin's traveler's checks. When they could not find a money changer's shop that was open, they went to Alhumedhin's hotel so he could ask money from his wife.

But Alhumedhin managed to ask for help from the hotel security guard.

Registration of cell phone users not answer to thefts, says group

By Agnes E. Donato

THE CONSUMER advocacy group TXTPower yesterday expressed fear that the proposal of Rep. Joseph Santiago to require the registration of prepaid cellular phone subscribers would mean a "huge cost" that might be charged to the consumers.

TXTPower spokesperson Antonio Cruz said the planned registration by the National Telecommunications Communication (NTC) would "surely entail a huge cost for accounting and data storage."

Cruz wanted to know who would shoulder the cost and said it should not be the consumers.

Describing the proposal as "politically motivated," Cruz said it was a step toward the censorship of text messages and surveillance of mobile phone users.

"We will not pay an additional centavo just so the government could monitor our every move in the guise of acting on cell phone thefts," Cruz said.

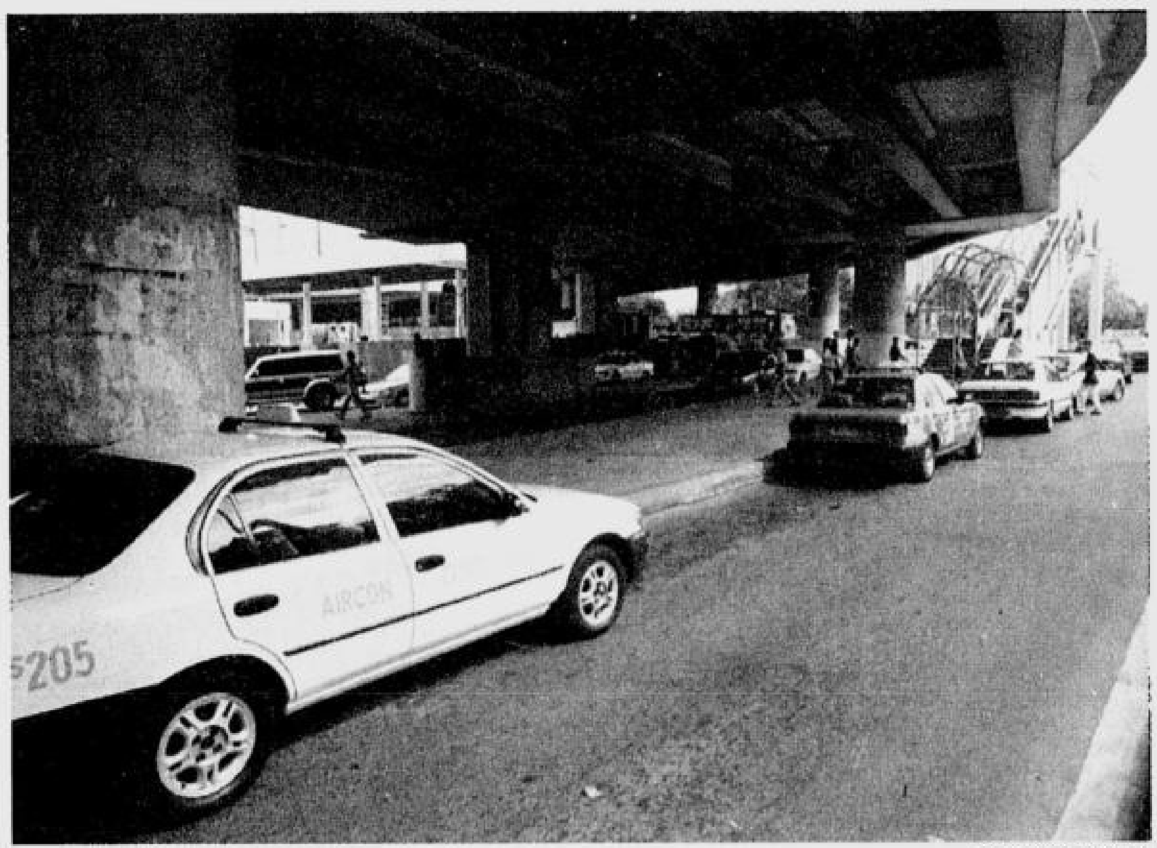
He said Santiago's proposal, himself a former NTC commissioner and a member of the pro-Estrada Nationalist People's Coalition, "will ultimately hit citizens who use their mobile phones to criticize rampant graft and corruption."

"While we have nothing to hide, the government does not have a right to even take a step toward knowing why, when, for whom, and how many times a certain text message or call is sent by a subscriber," said Cruz.

He recalled that NTC officials had reported last year that the registration of prepaid SIM cards was first proposed in 2000 by then-chief of the Philippine National Police Panfilo Lacson when texters were actively participating in mass actions for the ouster of President Joseph Estrada.

TXTPower instead urged Santiago, who represents the lone district of Catanduanes, and other members of Congress to investigate the operations of the two biggest telecommunications companies in the country, Globe and Smart, and their alleged collusion with the NTC.

"Cell phone snatching is so rampant because cellular phones are too expensive," Cruz said. "The best way to curb this crime is to make mobile phones more affordable for consumers and for Congress to make the NTC issue less cumbersome rules on the deactivation of stolen units."



JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

AN ACCIDENT WAITING TO HAPPEN

Taxis are still using this portion under the Edsa-Buendia overpass as a parking place, weeks after the INQUIRER published a similar photo to call the attention of traffic authorities. The parked cabs not only leave little space for other motorists that use the road, they are also a potential cause of accidents. What will it take traffic authorities to do something about this, a bloody accident?

Reward offered for arrest of vandals

By Alcuin Papa

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority has put up a reward for the arrest of graffiti writers and other vandals who deface public walls and posts in the metropolis.

MMDA Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. yesterday said he is offering a P5,000 reward for information leading to the apprehension and conviction of vandals.

"Graffiti is a sign of decay and there are people out there who are doing this with impunity," Abalos lamented.

Last month, he launched a campaign against graffiti and asked for the cooperation of barangay officials and the Philippine National Police. But not a single arrest has been made, he said.

He pointed out that barangay elections are just around the corner and election posters would deface the city streets again.

Abalos said he has prepared a model ordinance for city councils to pass to enforce stiff penalties for apprehended vandals.

"As long as you deface, disfigure and destroy, you should face a penalty," he said.

Making a mountain out of a molehill

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

OKAY, those US troops dressed in civilian clothes looked menacing when they displayed their sophisticated firepower outside a bank in Zamboanga City where some of their comrades were withdrawing money. They also looked OA "overacting" (as Filipinos call it) with their port-arms pose with an unmilitary get-up.

But do we have to be harsh on our American friends for that minor infraction of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA)?

C'mon, guys, let's not make a mountain out of a molehill!

* * *

As Marine Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio aptly put it, "I think (Filipinos), as allies, should be more forgiving and understanding."

Those guys are here to help us solve the festering problem of the Abu Sayyaf. If they committed a small mistake in pricking our "national pride," let's overlook it in favor of so much benefits we are getting from them.

***Ang hirap sa atin, masyado tayong ma-amor proprio, wala naman sa lugar.* Beggars can't be too demanding.**

The Americans did not force themselves on us; we asked for their help.

* * *

As a macho Batangueno would say, "*Parang nakalalaki lang yung mga Kano sa porma nila.*" They've hurt the macho personalities of many Filipino males.

"*Eh, kasi naman mga guwapo, matipuno at matikas ang tindig noong mga Kano na nasa diaryo,*" commented a *kanto* boy, "*kaya nanggagalaiti sa inggit ang iba diyan sa atin.*"

Well said, man!

* * *

President Macapagal-Arroyo has complained of not being given a break by her critics who belittle her achievements on the economic front.

"I work every day, 16 hours a day, six days a week, with only Sunday devoted to my family," said GMA before a sympathetic crowd in Valenzuela City last Thursday. "And then (critics) say it's not felt (by the people)."

She admitted that she had thought of giving up. "I feel like throwing in the towel instead; there's no more hope. Just serve out the rest of my term; just coast along."

* * *

Those presidential remarks would surely elicit howls of approval from her critics.

But those remarks were made not because GMA was complaining but because she wanted the citizenry to understand the enormity of the problems of the chief of state.

Like Fidel V. Ramos, GMA takes on problems like a workaholic. In fact, FVR and GMA are workaholics.

* * *

Even if all the members of both houses of Congress, as well as Malacañang, will allow former President Erap to travel to the US for a knee surgery, there is still the question of whether the Sandiganbayan will allow it.

The Sandiganbayan, which is hearing the plunder and other charges against Erap, belongs to the judiciary, a co-equal branch of the executive and legislative branches of government.

However, most citizens would still blame Malacañang if the Sandiganbayan would not approve Erap's US travel and something happened to him during his knee surgery in the country.

* * *

The so-called Edsa Tres was an offshoot of the high-profile arrest of Erap at his Greenhills residence by the police.

Erap's followers among the poor blamed Malacañang for the arrest when the order did not come from GMA but from the Sandiganbayan.

If the anti-graft court turns down the petition to have the former president undergo knee surgery in the US, Malacañang should make extra effort to make the public know it's the Sandiganbayan's decision, not Malacañang's.

* * *

National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agents arrested recently Bureau of Customs legal officer Domingo Leguiab for trying to extort P80,000 from several truck owners doing business at the South Harbor and the Manila International Container Port.

The NBI said that was not the first time Leguiab was arrested for extortion. He had been taken in twice before.

That makes Leguiab a recidivist. Why does the Bureau of Customs still retain him?

* * *

Harry Gasser, prominent news reader and commentator, has been accused of arson for trying to burn down a business establishment inside the North Fairview subdivision in Quezon City.

If I know Harry, who was my senior at pre-martial law radio station dzHP, he would do no such thing. He's a very peaceful man. He has never gotten into trouble even if he drinks a lot like most broadcasters and reporters.

Harry's accusers, Paul John Cruz and Edwin Cailes, are trying to get back at him although his wife is really their "enemy."

* * *

Flora Gasser, Harry's wife, is barangay captain of the Neapolitan side of North Fairview.

She wants to get rid of a structure that Cruz and Cailes have built in the middle of the street in their barangay. The two use the structure for an auto repair shop.

The structure hampers the flow of traffic in the village. Ms Gasser wants it removed.

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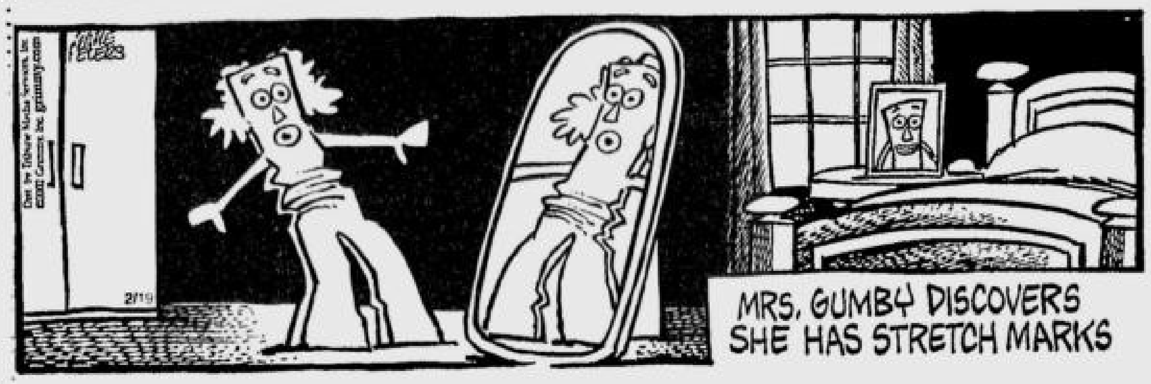
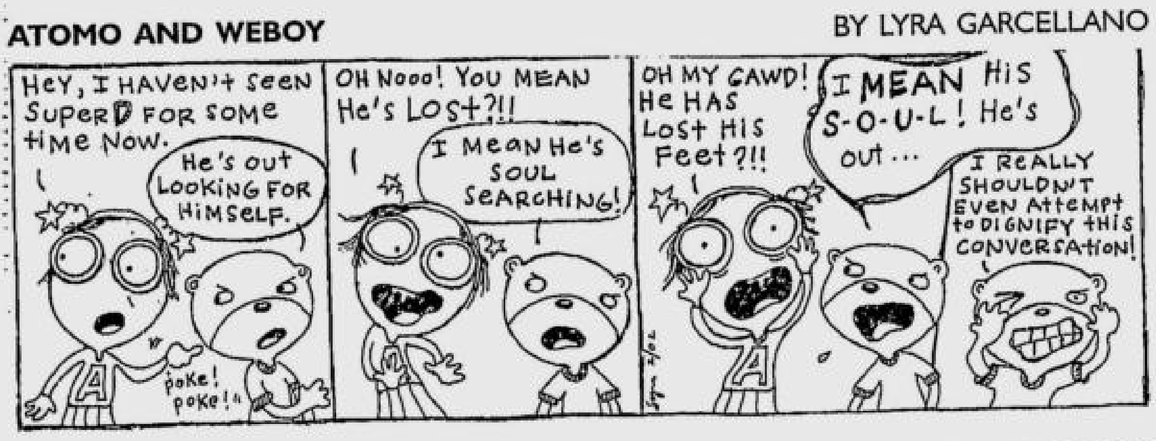
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


MRS. GUMBY DISCOVERS SHE HAS STRETCH MARKS

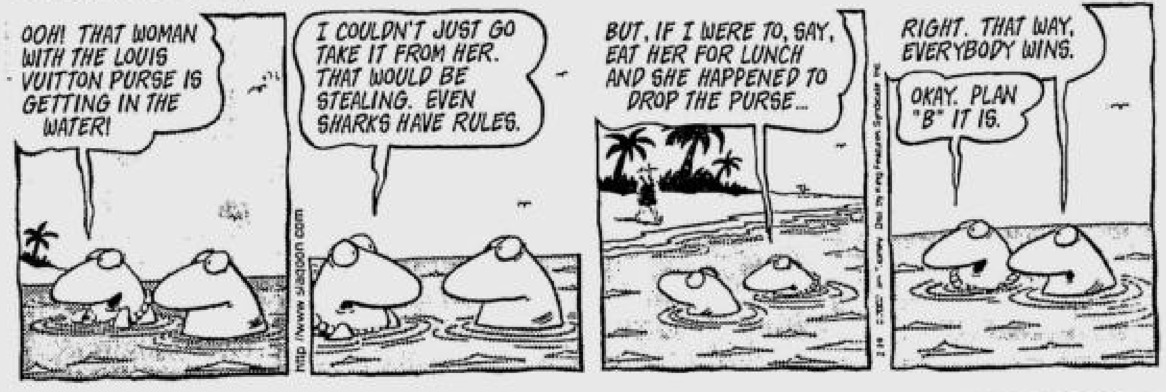
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HEY, I HAVEN'T SEEN SUPER D FOR SOME TIME NOW.
HE'S OUT LOOKING FOR HIMSELF.
POKE! POKE!
OH NOOO! YOU MEAN HE'S LOST?!!
I MEAN HE'S SOUL SEARCHING!
OH MY GAWD! HE HAS LOST HIS FEET?!!
I MEAN HIS S-O-U-L! HE'S OUT...
I REALLY SHOULDN'T EVEN ATTEMPT TO DIGNIFY THIS CONVERSATION!

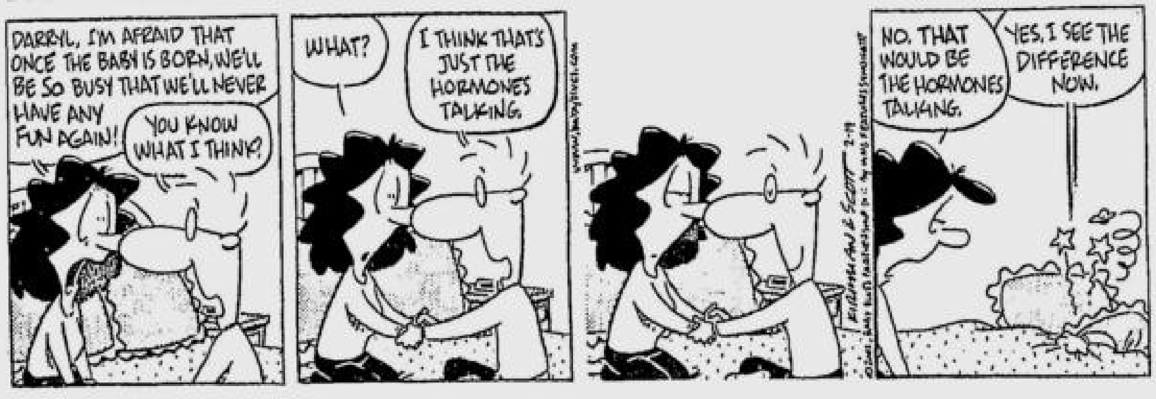
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


OOH! THAT WOMAN WITH THE LOUIS VUITTON PURSE IS GETTING IN THE WATER!
I COULDN'T JUST GO TAKE IT FROM HER. THAT WOULD BE STEALING. EVEN SHARKS HAVE RULES.
BUT, IF I WERE TO, SAY, EAT HER FOR LUNCH AND SHE HAPPENED TO DROP THE PURSE...
RIGHT. THAT WAY, EVERYBODY WINS.
OKAY. PLAN "B" IT IS.

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DARRYL, I'M AFRAID THAT ONCE THE BABY IS BORN, WE'LL BE SO BUSY THAT WE'LL NEVER HAVE ANY FUN AGAIN!
YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK?
WHAT?
I THINK THAT'S JUST THE HORMONES TALKING.
NO. THAT WOULD BE THE HORMONES TALKING.
YES, I SEE THE DIFFERENCE NOW.

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Justine Bateman, Smokey Robinson, Margaux Hemingway

Happy Birthday: You will be the one who moves into the role of leadership regarding personal financial affairs this year. You should take a serious look at your insurance policies, investments, wills or any other personal papers that may require updating. You should put some time aside to have fun this year. Your numbers are 11, 18, 26, 31, 35, 43

ARIES (March 21-April 19): No one will be able to keep up with you today. Your surefire way of getting everything accomplished will dazzle onlookers.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You may want to keep things to yourself for just a little longer. If you share your secret thoughts there is a good chance that someone will revamp your idea and use it as his or her own.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): The more you contribute to a group you belong to, the better. You will end up in a position of leadership if you play your cards right.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Someone you least expect may spread something about you that is exaggerated. Although there may be a slight bit of truth to what's being said, it will put you in an awkward position.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Your outgoing personality coupled with your desire to be and do everything yourself will help you separate yourself from those unwilling to work hard.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You'll have money on your mind today. Figure out a good strategy regarding saving and investing and you will get ahead this year.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Relationships will be hot. Whether you are building a stronger connection to the one you are in love with or you are single, you will find yourself in a favorable position to turn this part of your life around today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Focus on the people who can influence your future. If you put extra effort into the things that you enjoy doing the most, you will find that you will be doing more of these projects as time goes on.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You will be a fierce competitor today. Your skill coupled with your desire to make things happen will lead to a better future.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): This is not the best day to make changes around your home. Focus on your work, where you can make a difference.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18): This will be a great day to travel. Drop in to see someone you don't get to visit that often. A friendship will flourish if you are prepared to help solve a pressing problem.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): The more creative you are allowed to be, the better. You will have some great ideas for ways to make extra cash. Don't hesitate to start your own business.

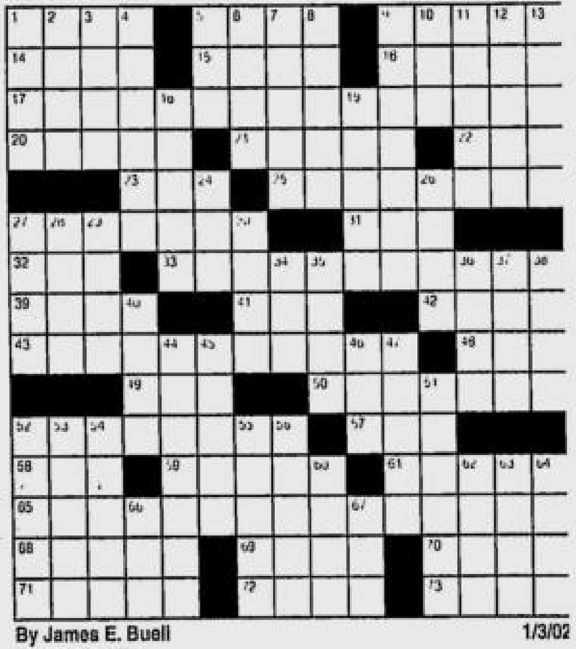
Birthday Baby: You have a need to possess and protect whatever you consider to be yours. You cling to those you love. You are sensitive and attuned to the thoughts and feelings of others. You have a wonderful imagination.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com

ACROSS
1 Borders
5 Fulda tributary
9 Cooking smell
14 Flaming Gorge state
15 Running behind
16 Tested one's courage
17 Snap
20 Flabbergast
21 Fabulist of yore
22 Moray or conger
23 Charged particle
25 Like gratis quarters
27 Was sparing
31 Dolores __ Rio
32 Smidgen
33 Roughhouse
39 Author Haley
41 Helping hand
42 Make a devout request
43 Take the stand
48 Uncouth clod
49 Melodic tune
50 More agile
52 Agility with energy
57 Golf standard
58 __ we there yet?
59 $100
61 Plunders
65 Take all the glory
68 Mindless
69 Sailor's saint
70 Han Solo's girlfriend
71 Big swigs
72 Comic Laurel
73 Transmitted

DOWN
1 Play trump
2 __ never happen
3 BLT spread
4 Sure thing
5 Keebler's Ernie, e.g.
6 Brent Spiner's android
7 Knockout gas
8 Actress Witherspoon
9 Flexibility device
10 Bled in the wash
11 Judge's demand
12 Free-for-all
13 Fred Astaire's sister
18 Suds
19 Accord concern
24 Classical opener?
26 Lead balloon
27 Wild guess
28 Story
29 Brainstorm
30 Mild expletive
34 Amoral deed
35 Idyllic place
36 River to the Caspian
37 Scruff
38 Color changer
40 Picture of a physician?
44 Hoisting machines
45 Castle or Dunne
46 Drink slowly
47 Diminutive
51 Cooks by direct heat
52 Respectful Hindu title
53 Recumbent
54 Imperial
55 Parts of shoes
56 Wading bird
60 Thompson of "Wit"
62 S-shaped curve
63 Dilute
64 Box-score brief
66 Blowup letters?
67 Very long period



By James E. Buell
Edgewater, FL

1/3/02

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

F	I	S	T	■	C	E	A	S	E	■	P	R	O	P
A	R	I	A	■	R	A	R	E	R	■	I	O	T	A
D	A	N	B	L	O	C	K	E	R	■	N	A	I	L
E	N	G	L	I	S	H	■	S	O	A	N	D	S	O
■	■	■	E	D	S	■	T	A	R	T	A	R	■	■
D	E	B	T	S	■	L	O	W	■	O	C	U	L	O
E	M	U	S	■	B	O	W	■	P	L	E	N	U	M
T	I	C	■	B	A	S	H	F	U	L	■	N	N	E
E	L	K	T	O	N	■	E	S	P	■	S	E	A	N
R	E	P	A	Y	■	E	A	U	■	P	U	R	R	S
■	■	A	S	C	E	N	D	■	P	A	N	■	■	■
S	E	S	T	E	T	S	■	A	S	T	R	I	D	E
E	L	S	E	■	H	I	T	C	H	H	I	K	E	R
V	I	E	R	■	E	L	E	N	A	■	S	E	E	S
E	A	R	S	■	R	E	N	E	W	■	E	S	M	E

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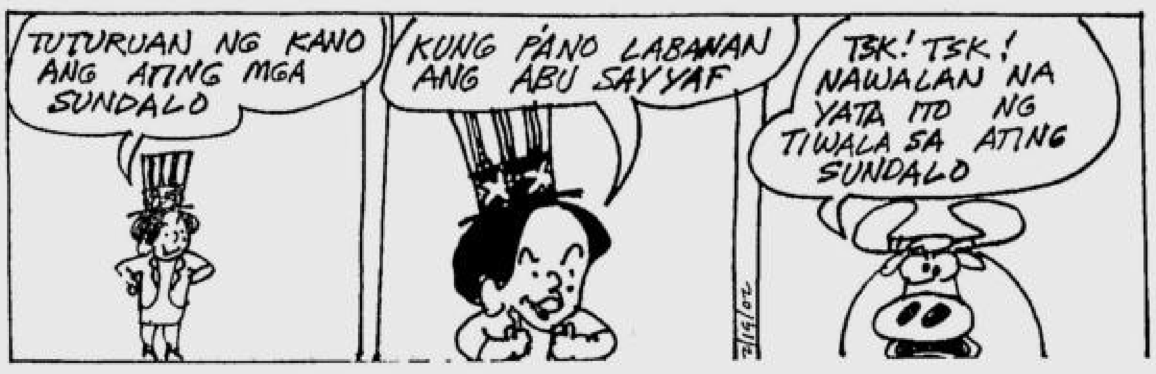
1/3/02

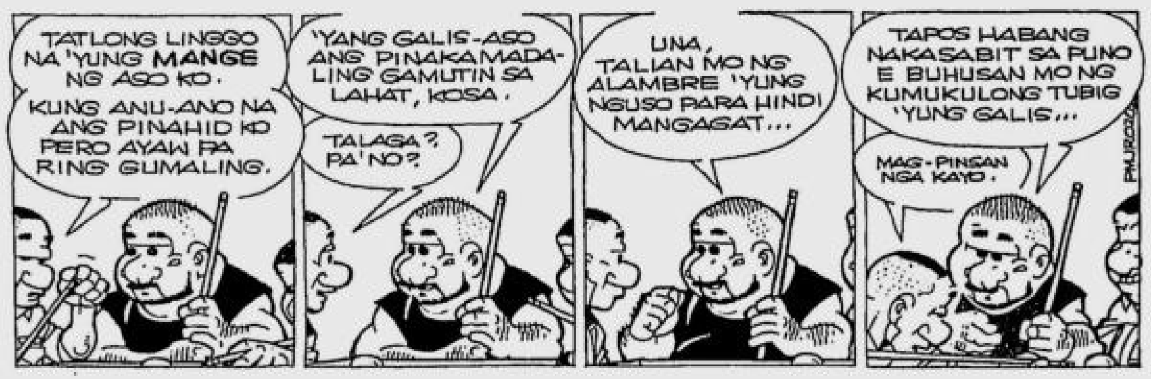
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


TUTURUAN NG KANO ANG ATING MGA SUNDALO
KUNG PANO LABANAN ANG ABU SAYYAF
TSK! TSK! NAWALAN NA YATA ITO NG TIWALA SA ATING SUNDALO

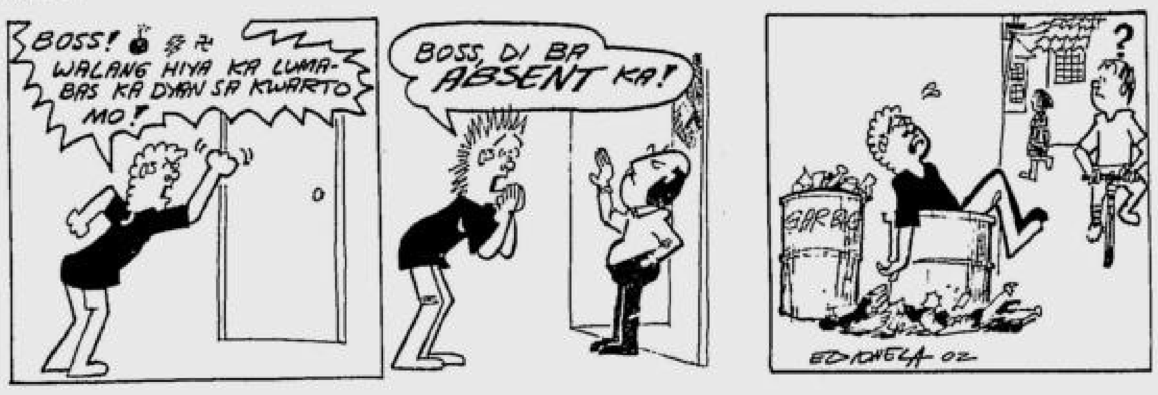
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


TATLONG LINGGO NA 'YUNG MANGE NG ASO KO.
KUNG ANU-ANO NA ANG PINAHID KO PERO AYAW PA RING GUMALING.
'YANG GALIS-ASO ANG PINAKAMADALING GAMUTIN SA LAHAT, KOSA.
TALAGA? PA'NO?
UNA, TALIAN MO NG ALAMBRE 'YUNG NGUSO PARA HINDI MANGAGAT...
TAPOS HABANG NAKASABIT SA PUNO E BUHUSAN MO NG KUMUKULONG TUBIG 'YUNG GALIS...
MAG-PINSAN NGA KAYO.

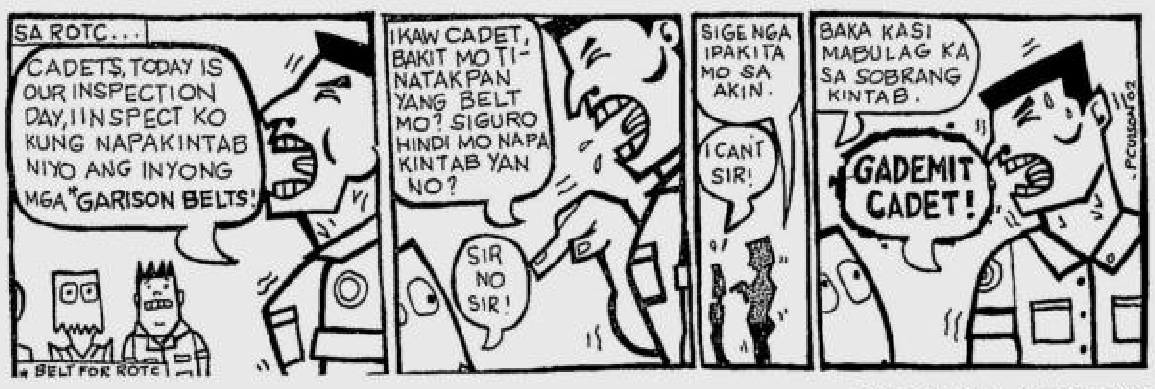
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


BOSS! WALANG HIYA KA LUMABAS KA DYAN SA KWARTO MO!
BOSS, DI BA ABSENT KA!
GARBAGE
?
EDIONELA 02

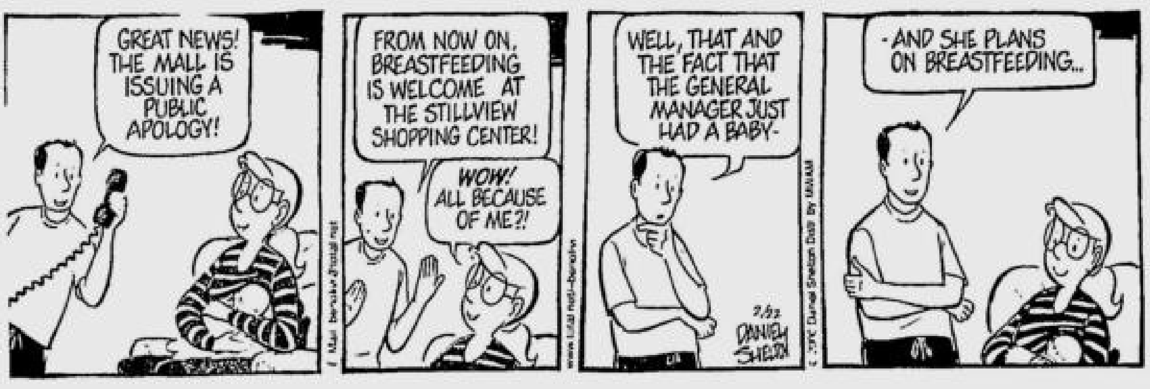
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


SA ROTC...
CADETS, TODAY IS OUR INSPECTION DAY, I INSPECT KO KUNG NAPAKINTAB NIYO ANG INYONG MGA *GARISON BELTS!
* BELT FOR ROTC
IKAW CADET, BAKIT MO TINATAKPAN YANG BELT MO? SIGURO HINDI MO NAPAKINTAB YAN NO?
SIR NO SIR!
SIGE NGA IPAKITA MO SA AKIN.
I CAN'T SIR!
BAKA KASI MABULAG KA SA SOBRANG KINTAB.
GADEMIT CADET!

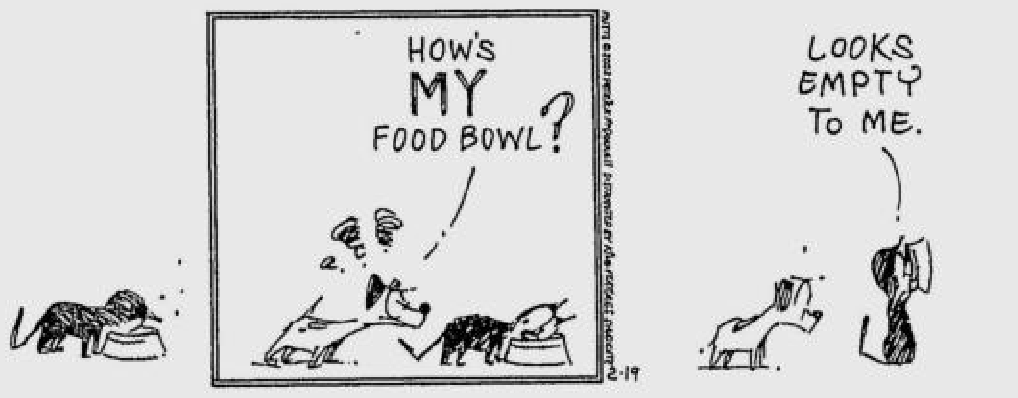
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GREAT NEWS! THE MALL IS ISSUING A PUBLIC APOLOGY!
FROM NOW ON, BREASTFEEDING IS WELCOME AT THE STILLVIEW SHOPPING CENTER!
WOW! ALL BECAUSE OF ME?!
WELL, THAT AND THE FACT THAT THE GENERAL MANAGER JUST HAD A BABY-
-AND SHE PLANS ON BREASTFEEDING...

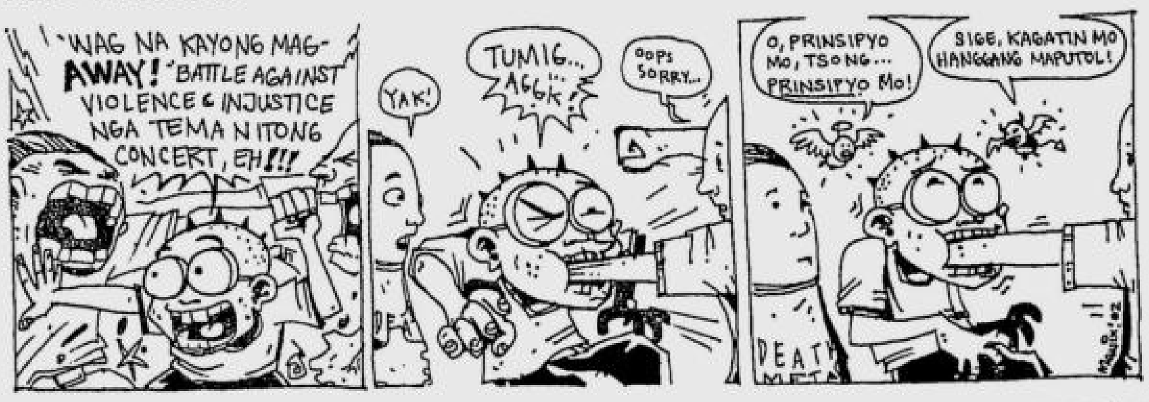
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HOW'S MY FOOD BOWL?
LOOKS EMPTY TO ME.

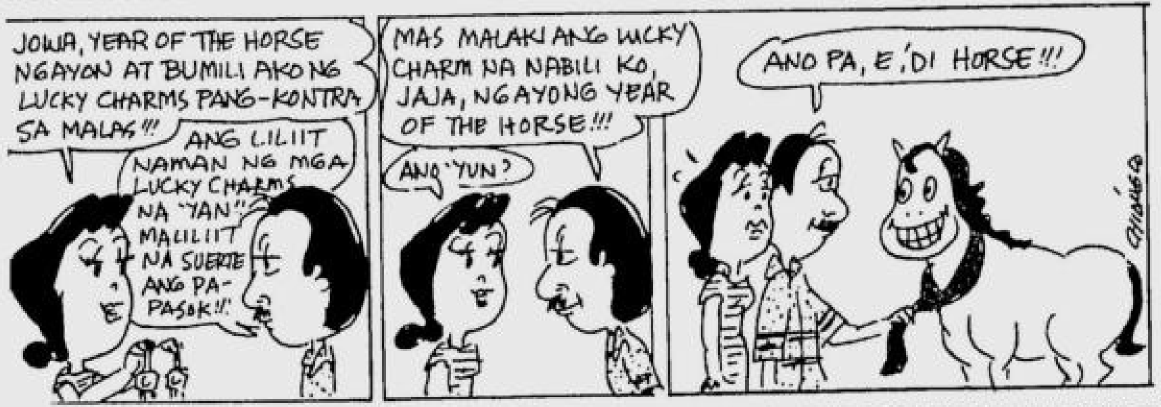
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


'WAG NA KAYONG MAG-AWAY! "BATTLE AGAINST VIOLENCE & INJUSTICE" NGA TEMA NITONG CONCERT, EH!!!
YAK!
TUMIG... AGGK!
OOPS SORRY...
O, PRINSIPYO MO, TSONG... PRINSIPYO MO!
SIGE, KAGATIN MO HANGGANG MAPUTOL!

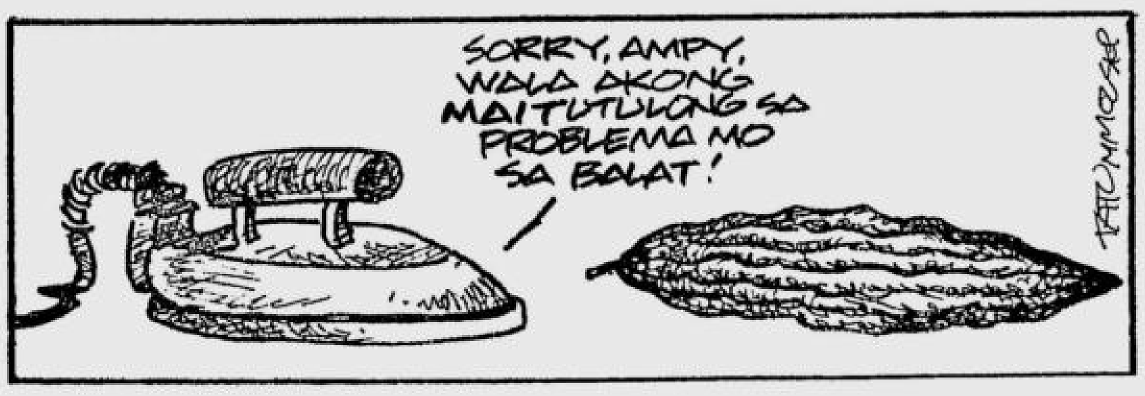
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, YEAR OF THE HORSE NGAYON AT BUMILI AKO NG LUCKY CHARMS PANG-KONTRA SA MALAS!!!
ANG LILIIT NAMAN NG MGA LUCKY CHARMS NA 'YAN!! MALILIIT NA SUERTE ANG PAPASOK!!
MAS MALAKI ANG LUCKY CHARM NA NABILI KO, JAJA, NGAYONG YEAR OF THE HORSE!!!
ANO 'YUN?
ANO PA, E, DI HORSE!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SORRY, AMPY, WALA AKONG MAITUTULONG SA PROBLEMA MO SA BALAT!

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173868

1	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
2	RIDING IN CARS
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	ISANG PANAGINIP
5	BLACK HAWK DOWN
6	IKAW LAMANG . . .
7	VANILLA SKY
8	KATE & LEOPOLD

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	RIDING IN CARS
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
5	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
6	ISANG PANAGINIP
7	VANILLA SKY
8	BLACK HAWK DOWN
9	KATE & LEOPOLD
10	IKAW LAMANG . . .

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	ISANG PANAGINIP
2	BLACK HAWK DOWN
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5	RIDING IN CARS
6	IKAW LAMANG . . .
7	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
8	VANILLA SKY
9	IKAW LAMANG . . .
10	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
11	KATE & LEOPOLD
12	FROM HELL

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	KATE & LEOPOLD
2	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
3	RIDING IN CARS
4	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5	FROM HELL
6	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
7	THE OTHERS
8	BLACK HAWK DOWN
9	IKAW LAMANG . . .
10	IKAW LAMANG . . .
11	ISANG PANAGINIP
12	VANILLA SKY

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	KATE & LEOPOLD
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5	RIDING IN CARS
6	PELIKULA AT LIPUNAN
7	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
8	IKAW LAMANG . . .
9	IKAW LAMANG . . .
10	BLACK HAWK DOWN
11	ISANG PANAGINIP
12	VANILLA SKY

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
8295452

1	RIDING IN CARS
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	IKAW LAMANG . . .
4	IKAW LAMANG . . .
5	KATE & LEOPOLD
6	VANILLA SKY
7	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
8	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
9	FROM HELL
10	BLACK HAWK DOWN
11	ISANG PANAGINIP
12	OCEAN'S ELEVEN

SM SOUTHMALL
8066782

1	BLACK HAWK DOWN
2	VANILLA SKY
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	IKAW LAMANG . . .
5	KATE & LEOPOLD
6	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
7	RIDING IN CARS
8	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
9	ISANG PANAGINIP
10	IKAW LAMANG . . .

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	CLOSED
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	VANILLA SKY
4	BLACK HAWK DOWN
5	LORD OF THE RINGS
6	ISANG PANAGINIP
7	IKAW LAMANG . . .
8	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	FINAL ANSWER
2	CLOSED
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	VANILLA SKY
6	ISANG PANAGINIP
7	CLOSED
8	BLACK HAWK DOWN

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7126015

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	VANILLA SKY
4	ISANG PANAGINIP
5	IKAW LAMANG . . .
6	IKAW LAMANG . . .

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1	ISANG PANAGINIP
2	IKAW LAMANG . . .
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	FROM HELL

SM CINEMA GUADALUPE
8820984

1	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	IKAW LAMANG . . .

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	ISANG PANAGINIP
3	IKAW LAMANG . . .
4	IKAW LAMANG . . .

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	BLACK HAWK DOWN
2	MAY PAG IBIG PA KAYA
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5	VANILLA SKY
6	LORD OF THE RINGS

SM BICUTAN

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

THE PODIUM
18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center Mandaluyong City

1
2

SOON TO OPEN!
2 NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART VISION & SOUND

6389781-85

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

AYALA CINEMAS NOW SHOWING

All Digital Sound

GLORIETTA 1
formerly QUAD

1 IKAW LAMANG HANGGANG NGAYON — In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
2 COLLATERAL DAMAGE — In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3 VANILLA SKY — In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4 KATE &LEOPOLD — In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1 IKAW LAMANG HANGGANG NGAYON — In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2 COLLATERAL DAMAGE — In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3 COLLATERAL DAMAGE THX — In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4 RIDING IN CARS W/ BOYS — In DTS DIGITAL SOUND — Art Films
5 KATE &LEOPOLD — In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6 BLACK HAWK DOWN — In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7 RIDING IN CARS W/ BOYS — In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GREENBELT

1 THE SOONG SISTERS — In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2 COLLATERAL DAMAGE — In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3 THE GOLDEN BOWL (Phil. Premiere) — In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4 ILLUSIONE FEB. 22, 23 & MARCH 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16 — Onstage

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE THX — In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2 COLLATERAL DAMAGE — In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3 RIDING IN CARS W/ BOYS — In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4 KATE &LEOPOLD — In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5 IKAW LAMANG HANGGANG NGAYON — In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING
EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	BLACK HAWK DOWN
2 (SDDS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3 (DTS)	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
4 GOLD (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	VANILLA SKY
6 GOLD (SDDS)	KATE & LEOPOLD
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	RIDING IN CARS
8	IKAW LAMANG . .
9	IKAW LAMANG . .
10	FROM HELL

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	RESERVED
2	
3 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	
5	
6 (DTS)	
Golden Pearl THX	

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	IKAW LAMANG .
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	HALIK SA AKING LUPA

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	FROM HELL
3	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5	KAULAYAW

METROPOLIS star
Tel. 850 4285

1	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
2	ISANG PANAGINIP
3	IKAW LAMANG . . .
4	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5	KAULAYAW
6	VANILLA SKY
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) Tel. 7512010 to 13

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	BLACK HAWK DOWN
2	FINAL ANSWER

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	RESERVED
2	HALIK SA LUPA
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
A	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	IKAW LAMANG
3	RESERVED
4	KAULAYAW

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8568

1 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	
3	
4	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
5	FROM HELL
6	IKAW LAMANG . .
7 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
8 (SDDS)	RIDING IN CARS
9 (DOLBY)	VANILLA SKY

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	IKAW LAMANG . . .

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	IKAW LAMANG . .
2	IKAW LAMANG . . .
3	ISANG PANAGINIP
4 (SDDS)	RIDING IN CARS
5	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
6 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
7 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
8	KAULAYAW
9	BLACK HAWK DOWN

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	IKAW LAMANG . .
3	KAULAYAW
4	ISANG PANAGINIP
5 (SDDS)	BLACK HAWK DOWN
6	IKAW LAMANG . .
7 (DOLBY)	RIDING IN CARS
8	HALIK SA AKING LUPA

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	KAULAYAW
3 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
5 (SDDS)	VANILLA SKY

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	IKAW LAMANG . .

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	IKAW LAMANG . .

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	HALIK SA LUPA
Lords	HALIK SA LUPA
Jennet	

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	HALIK SA AKING LUPA

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	IKAW LAMANG . .

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	IKAW LAMANG . . .
3	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
3	KAULAYAW
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	RESERVE

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	
2	

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	IKAW LAMANG . . .

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	IKAW LAMANG . . .
3 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	REBULOSYONARYO
2 (DTS)	IKAW LAMANG . .
3 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	HEARTS IN ATLANTIC

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	IKAW LAMANG
2 (DOLBY)	HEARRTS IN ATLANTIC
3 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	IKAW LAMANG

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	FINAL ANSWER
2	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 METRO TOWN
TEL. (045) 9821729 (Tarlac)

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	BLACK HAWK DOWN
3 (DOLBY)	VANILLA SKY
4 (DTS)	IKAW LAMANG

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
3	KAULAYAW
4 (DTS)	IKAW LAMANG . . .

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	HEARTS IN ATLANTIC
2	IKAW LAMANG . . .
3 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	KAULAYAW
5	HUSTLER

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	KAULAYAW

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	KAULAYAW

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	BLACK HAWK DOWN
2	IKAW LAMANG . . .
3	AMERICAN ADOBO

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	IKAW LAMANG . .
2	HUSTLER
3	RESERVE

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	KAULAYAW
2	IKAW LAMANG . . .
3	BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

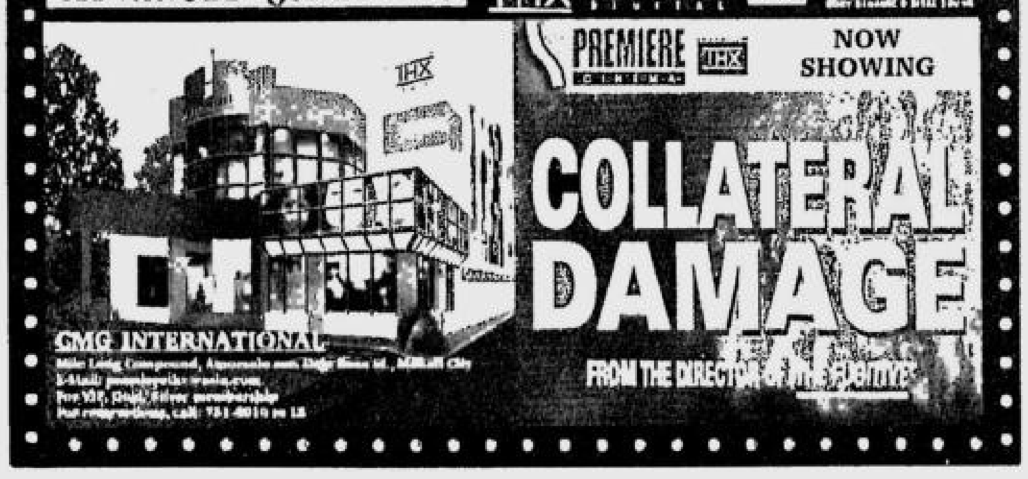
1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	MAY PAGIBIG PA KAYA
3	THE OTHERS
4	IKAW LAMANG

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	SPY GAME
2	IKAW LAMANG . .
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 (DTS ES)	ZOOLANDER

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS



MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS

NOW SHOWING

galleria
632-9115-16 /632-7641 loc. 279

1 THX	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	VANILLA SKY
4	RIDING IN CARS
5	IKAW LAMANG . . .
6	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
7	KATE & LEOPOLD
8	IKAW LAMANG . . .
9	FROM HELL
10	BLACK HAWK DOWN

ermita
526-7809 to 12

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	VANILLA SKY
3	IKAW LAMANG . . .
4	RIDING IN CARS
5	KATE & LEOPOLD
6	IKAW LAMANG . . .
7	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

metro east -PASIG
682-8193 / 8030

1	RIDING IN CARS
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	IKAW LAMANG. . .
4	KATE & LEOPOLD
5	FROM HELL
6	IKAW LAMANG. . .
7	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
8	VANILLA SKY

novaliches
935-2209 to 30

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	VANILLA SKY
4	BLACK HAWK DOWN
5	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
6	KATE & LEOPOLD
7	IKAW LAMANG . . .
8	IKAW LAMANG . . .

imus
(046) 471-8188

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	VANILLA SKY
4	RIDING IN CARS
5	IKAW LAMANG . . .
6	IKAW LAMANG . . .

bacolod
(034) 441-0453 / 0459

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	ISANG PANAGINIP
4	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	OCEAN'S ELEVEN
6	FINAL ANSWER

iloilo
(033) 336-8077 / 8078

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	VANILLA SKY
4	AMERICAN ADOBO
5	MAY PAG IBIG PA KAYA
6	BLACK HAWK DOWN

star mills-
San Fernando, PAMPANGA

soon to open
with 6 NEW
state-of-the-art cinemas
THX

NOW SHOWING:

SCHWARZENEGGER
THE ACT OF TERROR WASN'T PERSONAL. HIS VENGEANCE WILL BE
COLLATERAL DAMAGE

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

It's time . . .

From page A23

make a mistake are the ones who lose the groove.

Another analogy in life. If you dwell too much on the wrong things you've done, you'll get stuck.

The contestants who lose have to pass the "walk of shame" when they exit. Any embarrassing moment in your life that would somehow put you in the same boat as the losers on "TWL?"

As far as I can remember, nothing really major. Well . . . maybe the time I went out on a date when I was still in school and I didn't have enough money to pay for the bill. *Dyahe!*

What would you say is your weakest link?

I can't stay put in one place. I'll die of boredom.

How about staying put with one woman?

(Laughs) I'm happily settled now.

What advise do you give your son Luis now that he has a girlfriend? Would you ever allow him to endorse any product like other celebrities' children do?

I don't give him any advice. Of course, the basic gentleman things like pull her chair and open her door, but that's about it. I believe that you should allow your children to learn from their own mistakes. If you try too hard to impose rules, they end up not following them so what's the point? If you shelter them too much they won't grow.

I have nothing against celebrity kids endorsing stuff but personally, as long as I can afford to pay for Luis' education, I'm not letting him do a single ad. There are offers for both of us to be in an ad but I decline. The most I can do is hang out with Luis and have fun wearing almost identical outfits. I even copy the way he walks when we have our boys' night out. *Dapat ako na lang ang kunin* image model, *para iba*. At 46, I'll have billboards everywhere.

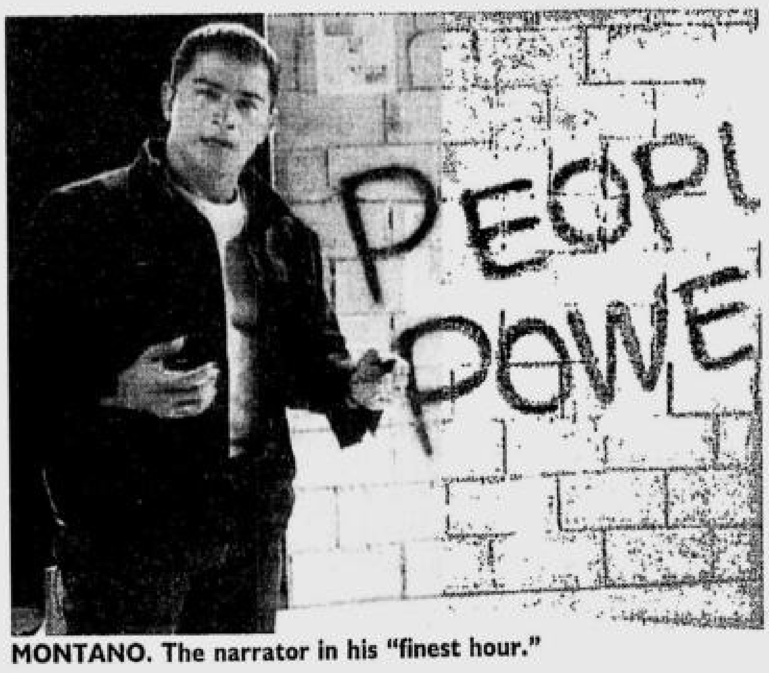
Seriously now, I don't feel my age. I feel that there's still so much to learn and to do.

For feeback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or wateringhole2000@yahoo.com

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	IKAW LANG HANGGANG . . .
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	ISANG PANAGINIP
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	VANILLA SKY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	RIDING IN CARS w/ BOYS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	BLACK HAWK DOWN
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	IKAW LANG HANGGANG . . .
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT / SOURCE OF THE NIGHT
ODEON	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
ODEON-2	KAULAYAW
ROBEN	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	JOY RIDE / KING OF GLADIATORS
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
REMAR	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
REMAR-2	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	IKAW LAMANG HANGGANG NGAYON
B	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	RIDING IN CARS WITH BOYS
CINEMA-2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	REBULOSYONARYO
CINEMA-2	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
CINEMA-3	MARSHALL DICK
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	FROM HELL
CINEMA-6	KATE & LEOPOLD
CINEMA-7	IKAW LANG HANGGANG NGAYON
CINEMA-8	KUNG IKAW AY ISANG PANAGINIP
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	RIDING CARS w/ BOYS
CINEMA-12	VANILLA SKY
CINEMA-14	IKAW LANG HANGGANG NGAYON
CINEMA-15	IKAW LANG HANGGANG NGAYON
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	RIDING IN CARS WITH BOYS
CINEMA-2	KATE & LEOPOLD
CINEMA-3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-4	IKAW LAMANG HANGGANG NGAYON
CINEMA-5	VANILLA SKY
CINEMA-6	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

Video documentary on People Power premieres tonight



MONTANO. The narrator in his "finest hour."

THE PREMIERE of the video documentary, "Lakas Sambayanan (People Power)," will be held 6 tonight at the NCCA's Tanghalang Leandro V. Locsin in Intramuros, Manila.

DECS Secretary and former Senator Raul Roco will be the guest of honor in the event which is being jointly sponsored by the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWPP) and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

"Lakas-Sambayanan" traces the history of People Power in the Philippines and is narrated by multi-awarded actor Cesar Montano.

"Lakas-Sambayanan" is the second documentary produced by the FWPP after 1997's "Batas Militar."

Entertainment columnist and film critic Nestor U. Torre praised "Lakas-Sambayanan" as a "must-see program" and called Montano's performance as the actor's "finest hour."

FWPP president Eugenia D. Apostol and secretary-treasurer Felicitas A. Arroyo are the documentary's executive prodcuers.

For more information, interested parties may contact Butch Hernandez at 633-2185 or Elvert Banares at 527-2207.

TOMORROW, hang on to your funnybone!

Six teams.
Seven hundred miles.
Two million dollars cash.
And only one rule: Get to it first.

RAT RACE

FROM DIRECTOR JERRY ZUCKER
CO-CREATOR OF AIRPLANE AND THE NAKED GUN

SKYFILMS

MTRCB RATING G General Patronage ALL AGES ADMITTED.

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HEATHER GRAHAM
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FROM HELL
www.fromhellmovie.com

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GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
DOLBY DIGITAL
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CINEMA 1	CINEMA 2
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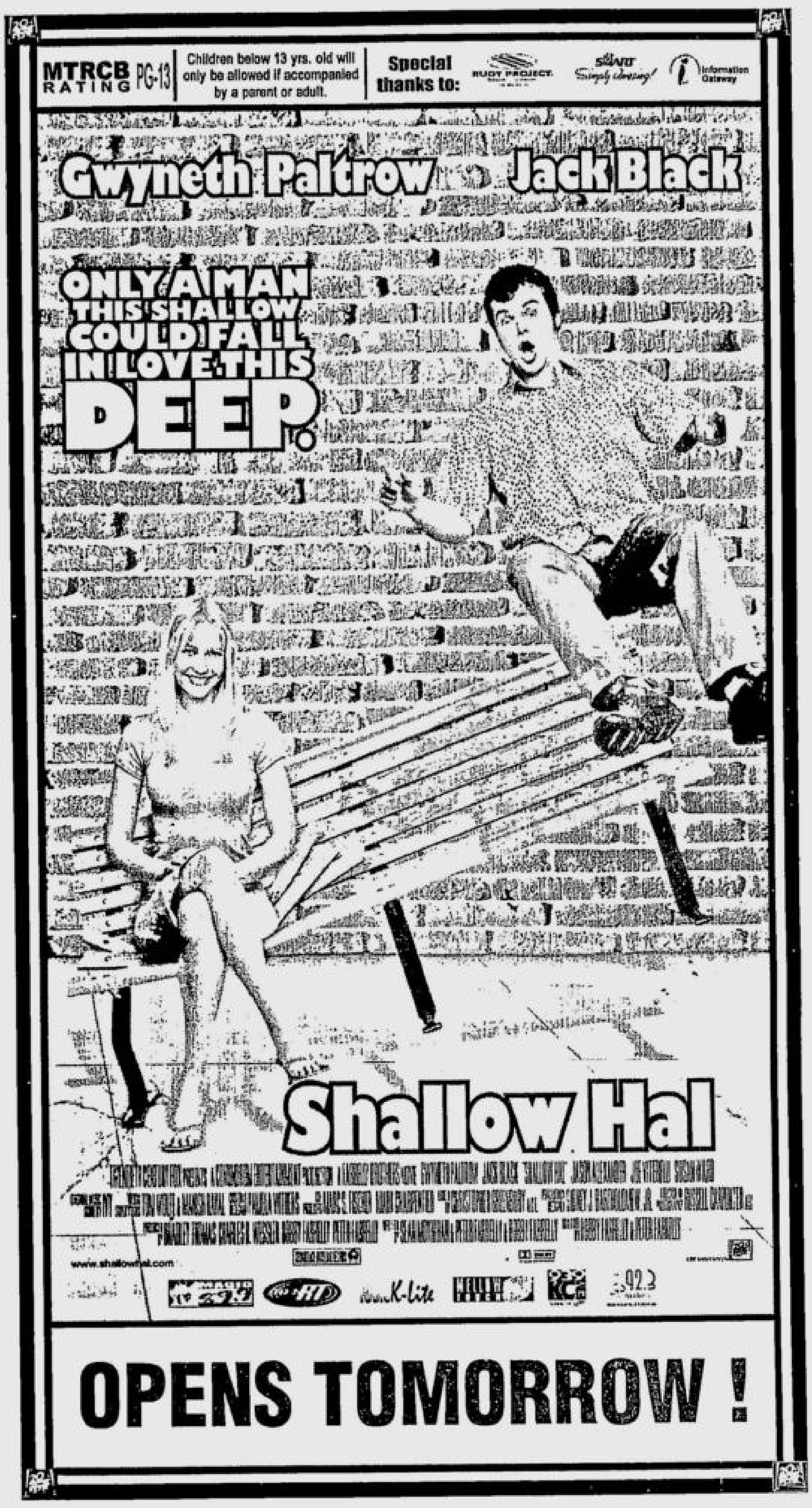
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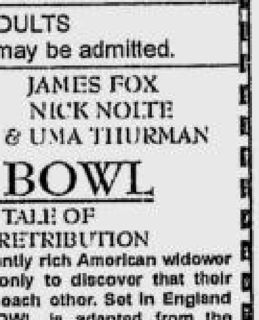

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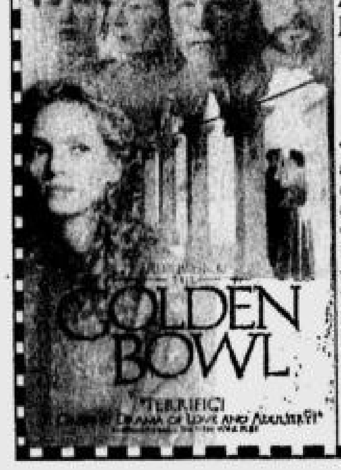

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VIEWFINDE

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: Will there be calamities and disasters this year?

Guest: We are preparing for them, just in case.

Host: How are you doing that?

Guest: Well, collecting clothes, for instance. The needy may be hit by calamities and disasters that need garments!

(Can't have a naked earthquake running around!)

* * *

Host: What do you have to say to the kidnappers?

Official: If they release the victims, they will be OK. After the release, they will no longer be pressurized by pursuing people.

(*Ay*, pressurized!)

* * *

Host: *Paano ka nag-umpisa sa* show biz?

Starlet: Sa movies.

Host: *At papano naman nag-umpisa ang* movie career *mo*?

Starlet: *Nagsimula sa* Broadway *ang aking* movie career!

(Duh!)

* * *

Host: If you and your husband separate, how will you take care of your children?

Guest: We will divide them.

Host: Really? How?

Guest: In one week, *limang araw sa akin, tatlong araw sa kanya.*

(There are eight days in your week?)

* * *

Host: Why have you decided to come out TV to finally talk about your marital problems?

Guest: Because there are too many black propaganda against me already, it's too much!

Host: So, you are answering the charges?

Guest: Yes, because here in the Philippines, silence is admittance!

(Do tell!)

* * *

Host: But, will you admit that you were also to blame for the break-up of your marriage?

Guest: Yes, I admit, I'm not a saint—I would be a *hiporkit* if I said I was!

(*Ay, hiporkit*!)

* * *

Host: Tell our viewers why they should watch our basketball coverage in the coming weeks.

Cohost: Because, modesty aside, it's the status of a league *dito sa ating* nation!

(Ano daw?)

* * *

Host: What do you see in the cards for the Philippines this year?

Fortune teller: As I see it, this year is not a stable!

(Even if it is the Year of the Horse?)

* * *

Host: So, what can we do to counteract the bad prospects for the year?

Fortune teller: We need to attack prosperity!

(Huh?!!)

* * *

Host: You have a very interesting shop.

Can you share with our viewers the most unique collection you are displaying this month?

Shop owner: Well, we are very proud of our collection of antique religious!

(Like, old priests and nuns—?!)

* * *

Host: How can we make sure that our remaining forests don't get depleted?

Guest: *Kailangang ipagbawal ang* illegal *na punong kahoy*!

(Ah, please repeat?)

* * *

Host: Are you ready to give your update?

Cohost: Yes, without much further, here is my report!

(No further comment!)

'Violin' kaleidoscope'

ON WEDNESDAY, Feb. 20, "Violin Kaleidoscope" features Japanese violinist **Junko Ohtsu** in a concert at 7 p.m. at St. Cecilia's Hall, St. Scholastica's College, Leon Guinto St., Malate, Manila.

This is the opening event of Philippine-Japan Festival 2002 and is presented by the Japan Foundation, the Japanese Embassy, and St. Scholastica's College. Call 811-6155.

Ohtsu began studying the violin at age 4. She studied abroad as a scholar at the Juilliard School in the US. She made her New York debut through the invitation of Jeunesses Musicales International and Carnegie Hall, where she received rave reviews.

Her recital program, "The Artistry of Junko Ohtsu," was broadcast through the public television network to 30 cities in the States.

"Violin Kaleidoscope" will also feature piano and Latin percussion by similarly acclaimed Japanese performing artists **Masahiko Satoh** and **Kei Wada**, respectively.

It's time to find out Edu's weakest link

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

GAME shows are the in thing these days. Who knows how long the fad will last?

Among all the game shows, my personal favorite is "The Weakest Link." The original version is aired in BBC London and 72 countries have their own "TWL." But of course, Pinoy humor is something else. Even in the worst of times we all manage to find something funny.

I can't imagine "TWL" being hosted by someone other than **Edu Manzano**. Not everyone can get away with poking fun at contestants without offending them. Edu has the gift of being able to do just that.

Even as a friend, I've always delighted in my verbal jousts with Edu. Once he saw me and his son **Luis** talking. He told him, "Stay away from that woman. She's dangerous!"

Every time we bump into each other, Edu would say, "Thanks for sparing my son."

The Edu you see on "TWL" is no act. He's just being himself. The poker-face look that's about to break into a half-smile is pure Edu Manzano. No doubt the popularity of "TWL" has a lot to do with Edu's candidness and charm.

More than the anwers to the questions, it's his one-liners and jokes I stay glued to the TV for. He never fails to crack me up.

Had a "head to head" (as he says on "TWL") with Edu over *merienda* recently. Start the clock. It's time to find out Edu's weakest link.

I heard that most of your spiels on "The Weakest Link" are adlibs. You never seem to run out of ideas.

Even as I drive to the studio, I look around and find something funny and I keep that in mind and when it's applicable I just blurt it out on the show. Or people would tell me all these crazy things that happen to them, so they give me more ideas. I try to make my spiels as spontaneous as possible so that the format is *'di naman de kahon.* But of course there are some guidelines we have to stick to because we're patterned after "TWL" in London. Like I always have to say "start the clock. It's time to play the Weakest Link etc.

At least now I'm allowed to smile a bit. The host in the London version exudes the aura of a strict schoolteacher.

Your standard spiel "Goodbye" with an intonation all your own has become a running joke. Everyone imitates the way you say it.

It's really amazing. After so many years in the biz trying to make serious movies, I never thought one line would make me so famous. Sometimes when people see me, especially in the provinces, they don't call me Edu. They holler "Goodbye!" After working so hard all these years, "Goodbye" *lang pala sikat na 'ko.*

Didn't you ever get into trouble with any of the contestants because of your lambasting spiels?

I am not allowed to meet the contestants prior to the show. I meet them while we're taping already. What I do is I read the background research on them so I know more or less how to deal with them. We get the whole spectrum. In one panel, we can have a security guard side by side with a techie. I like it when the contestants interact with me. *'Yung bang lumalaban.* I welcome the idea of contestants who would snap back at me just for the fun of it.

I just make sure I don't crack racist or religion-related jokes. What I want to change, though, is the Pinoy "*lang po*" mentality. When I ask a contestant, "What do you do for a living?" and he answers "*Mekaniko lang po*" or whatever, I correct him and I say, "*Bakit naman may lang po?*" I want to teach them that there's dignity in labor so no matter what your job is, you must be proud of it.

How do you deal with contestants who find it hard to accept that they lost?

I talk to them after the show. Like one time, we had long-standing rivals in one panel. One guy could not get over the fact that this other guy beat him in a contest before and by some stroke of fate they ended up joining TWL at the same time. He lost again so after the show I was already in my car and I noticed that guy walking back and forth so I called him. "You need a ride home?" Then he told me the story about the other guy. Just like in life you've got to get up and keep trying.

A word of caution to would-be contestants. It's just a game. Please don't take it too seriously. Besides, they can always join again.

On a lighter note, there's a couple who will get married and the money they'll be using is what the guy won in the show. And I got to meet a really good chef who was a contestant. He makes excellent Japanese food and cheaper at that. I hosted a dinner at home and hired him to cook.

What would you say is the secret of winning on "TWL?"

Aside from sheer luck and good sense of timing, I think it's the contestants who don't fuss too much when they make a mistake who end up winning. Those who shake their head vigorously or stamp their feet when they

IT'S TIME / A22

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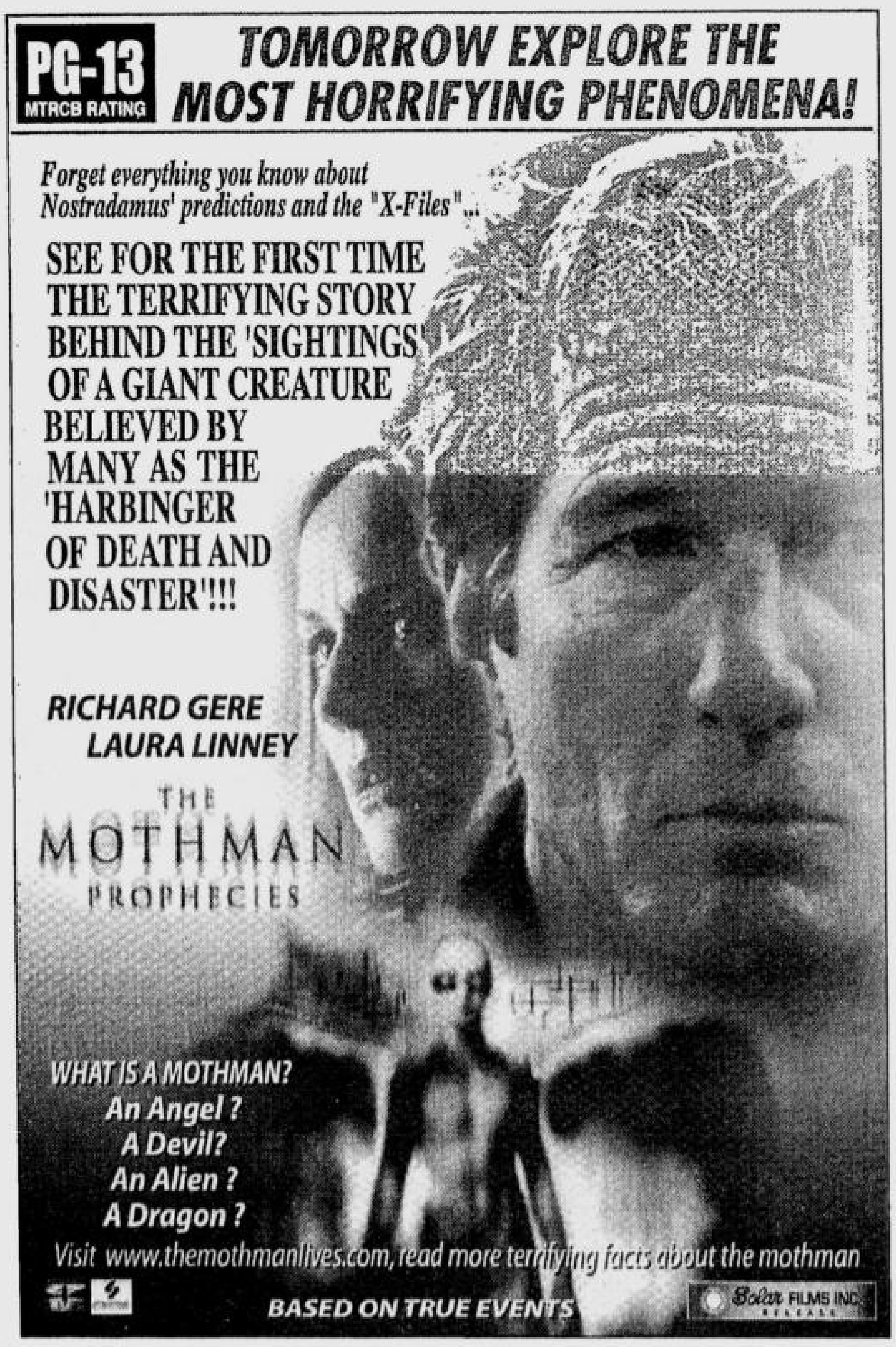

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Britney Spears . . .

From page A24

Chasez and Timberlake, and Christina Aguilera and Keri Russell.

She has a naturalness on screen. "She comes off as a nice girl," says Conniff. "She's not a diva, and I think that works in her favor in the long run."

Spears says she came up with the basic idea for "Crossroads" when she started receiving scripts for projects that didn't spark her interest. A screenwriter later elaborated on the idea.

"I was like, why not come up with our own movie? And a concept that I can be really passionate about and I can put my heart into," she says. "When I realized I could do that, then I thought up the whole three-girls-being-best-friends-and-going-on-a-road-trip-together, and that whole adventure, and what friends go through."

While "Crossroads" touches on serious topics such as date rape, teen pregnancy and teen sex, it's rated PG-13 and is probably less provocative than an average episode of "Dawson's Creek." Spears worries some fans might think it's "too squeaky clean."

"But I think it's real," she adds. "And I think it's very tastefully done."

Whatever happens, given the public's fascination with her, "Crossroads" is sure to get attention.

"Britney Spears is a guilty pleasure, for all ages," says Conniff. "As much as people like to criticize her . . . they are fascinated by her image. They can't take their eyes off of her." **AP**

Editor Louie C. Camino

SPEARS. She says she will never be able to do a sex scene.

Britney Spears makes the big leap to movies

NEW YORK — She's dressed like a junior version of Pamela Anderson, in a clingy tank top, tight blue jeans and zebra-print, stiletto-heeled boots. But when she talks, 20-year-old Britney Spears sounds like a sweet teenager any parent would be proud of.

Spears flashes a look of embarrassment when discussing a love scene—a very tame one—in her film debut, "Crossroads."

"Actually, they wanted me to do a little bit more at first, but I would never be able to do a sex scene. It's awkward enough kissing someone," she says in her Louisiana drawl, sitting in a dressing room between rehearsals for a recent guest-host appearance on "Saturday Night Live."

"I read in some magazine that I wanted to take my top off in the movie," she continues. "I would never, ever do that!"

That mixture of girlish charm and vampy sex appeal has characterized Spears' meteoric rise, which drove a teen pop craze and produced three multi-platinum albums in four years.

These days, she seems to be everywhere. Turn on the radio, and Britney's cooing her latest single, "I'm Not A Girl, Not Yet A Woman."

Turn on the TV or go to the movies, and there she is pushing Pepsi in a multimillion-dollar ad campaign. Then there are the magazine covers, the MTV airplay, the tour and HBO special, the talked-about romance with 'N Sync's Justin Timberlake and, now, a film.

And although her core fan base is teen-age girls and younger, it now seems that everyone knows the blond, midriff-baring singer—and has an opinion about her.

"People have a love-hate relationship with Britney Spears," says Tamara Conniff, music editor for The Hollywood Reporter. She attributes that to Spears' ubiquity and her rapid evolution from doe-eyed schoolgirl to hot babe.

"That caused a lot of people to question, 'Is she too sexy to be a role model for little girls?'" says Conniff.

In Spin magazine's March issue, readers named Spears sex goddess of the year—and also worst solo artist. When cleavage-baring posters for her HBO special went up all over New York City last fall, they were defaced with such venom that national media took notice.

Spears' near-striptease was the showstopper of the MTV Music Video Awards in 2000; she returned as scene-stealer the next year too, singing "I'm a Slave 4 U" with a python writhing around her shoulders.

"Of course, not everybody's going to like me, and I know that," Spears says. "It's human nature, and that's what makes the world go round."

She says she is bewildered by all the attention. When asked about her scanty outfits, she sighs.

"I'm on stage, I'm performing; Janet (Jackson) wears clothes like that, Destiny's Child wears clothes like that—like everyone! And I was always pinpointed. I never understood that."

As for magazines that rank her among the sexiest pop stars, her eyes bug out and she scrunches her face in disagreement.

"I don't see myself that way at all. I mean, yeah, I dress up like we all do when I go somewhere, but"—she stammers in a little-girl voice—"I don't—it's very flattering that they say that . . . (but) I don't think so."

Then there's the speculation about her sex life. Although she announced a couple of years ago that she was a virgin, her increasingly suggestive videos—and her romance with Timberlake, with whom she lives in Los Angeles—have made some people wonder.

"I kind of regret bringing it up," she says now.

But then she raises more questions about it. "I mean, I would love to try and do that—I would really like that. But when that day comes, and maybe that happens, I'm just gonna be—Oregon, starting now, I'm going like, that's a personal question!" she says, then breaks into a laugh.

Tru Pettigrew, who does market research on the 12-to-24 age group for the Boston firm Y-Access, says Spears' fan base initially consisted of teen-age girls and has actually gotten younger over time.

"And I will admit that she does have a certain sex appeal with older guys," Pettigrew says.

He believes that "Crossroads" is the right vehicle for Spears to help solidify her original fan base, teen girls. She plays Lucy, a virginal A-student trying to please her demanding dad, who raised her alone. After high-school graduation, Lucy embarks on a road trip with two childhood girlfriends to find her mother, and they hitch a ride with a handsome mystery man.

"It's very relevant to what's appealing to that teen-girl lifestyle right now, that camaraderie with other girls," Pettigrew says.

Making the leap from pop star to movie star has tripped up some big names. Mariah Carey's feature-film debut last year, "Glitter," was a high-profile flop. On the other hand, Mandy Moore—a teen singer less successful than Spears—has a hit in theaters now with "A Walk to Remember." Moore previously did a supporting role in the Reese Witherspoon starrer, "Legally Blonde."

"Crossroads" director Tamra Davis acknowledges that people may expect more from Spears because of who she is.

"I think that people will come in there pretty critical of her . . . especially kids. A lot of them are her fans, but a lot of them might be critical of her, too," Davis says.

"It was brave for her to do a film, and I definitely think she pulled it off."

For her part, Spears says she's not interested in whether critics like her movie.

"Because everything the critics like I hate, and everything that they hate I like," she says. "I like lighthearted, girl-flick, love story movies. It's easy to watch, not that damn deep."

This isn't Spears' first acting gig. As a child, she acted in commercials and off-Broadway plays before getting her break as a mousketeer on Disney's revived "The Mickey Mouse Club," which also featured N'Sync members J.C.

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T-bill rates hit new 15-year lows

By Clarissa S. Batino

TREASURY bill rates fell for the seventh straight week yesterday, pushing the 91-day yield down 18.6 basis points to a new 15-year low of 7.092 percent as banks still chose to lend their funds to the government instead of the private sector.

The rate of the 182-day instrument also shed 20.2 basis points to 7.608 percent. The auction raised P3 billion for the government although offers for the two tenors reached P10.44 billion.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said the drop in treasury bill rates might start to slow down in the coming auctions given a lack of news that could prod the market to keep bringing the yields down aggressively.

Yesterday's decline in rates was expected after the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas announced a quarter-of-a-percentage-point cut in overnight rates last week and a statement from BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura that there could still be room to reduce the key rates.

"The BSP had hinted that there could be more rate cuts if inflation would continue to be benign. The market took this as a positive signal to bid lower in our borrowings even if the rate cut last week had been largely discounted," Edeza said.

He added that the fixed-income market could be discounting this early the possibility of another cut from the BSP even after the central bank said the rate cut last week was the last for the first half.

Edeza has not given up on the possibility that the benchmark borrowing rate of the government could beat 6.98 percent, a level recorded in January 1987.

The treasurer said the government would announce next week the borrowing rate for the second quarter and it would include the issuance of as much as P4 billion worth of 20-year bonds as well as P5 billion to P10 billion worth of retail treasury bonds.

The 20-year bonds could be auctioned as early as March while the retail treasure bonds would be sold in May.

"We want to issue long-term bonds to take advantage of lower interest rates and to lock-in our borrowings at these lower yields," Edeza explained.

The 20-year bonds would be sold directly to the banks through an auction while the retail notes could be handled by a set of underwriters whose offers have yet to be solicited by the government.

A trader from a foreign bank said that while the appetite for credit has not improved, lenders still chose to put their money in risk-free government securities.

"There is so much liquidity in the system and there are no instruments yet where they could place their money. There are only two tenors to put their money in after we suspended the auction of the one-year treasuries until March," Edeza pointed out.

The treasurer said rates have not bottomed out yet given a promising outlook on inflation. He noted, however, that the reduction in the cost of the government's borrowing might start to weaken specially in the coming weeks when no inflation data or rate cut announcement is expected from the government.

"This is unless the market thinks it can still bring down the rates some more. They are very much welcome if they do that," Edeza said.

A favorable inflation outlook would give the central bank more room to reduce its overnight rates. Thus, the treasury bill rates could also continue its declining trend.

T-BILL/ B4

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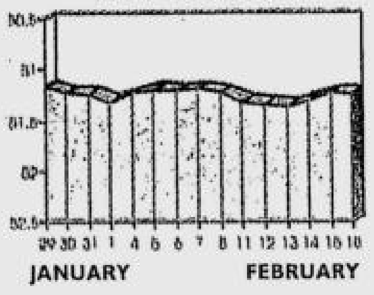

GRAPHS BY ROBERT ANDRES

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Feb. 18, 2002

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Japan	Yen	0.008633	0.007543	0.3866
United Kingdom	Pound	1.638663	1.431700	73.3761
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.146927	0.128370	6.5791
Switzerland	Franc	0.674578	0.589379	30.2063
Canada	Dollar	0.720301	0.629327	32.2536
Singapore	Dollar	0.627499	0.548246	28.0982
Australia	Dollar	0.591503	0.516796	26.4863
Bahrain	Dinar	3.036123	2.652661	135.9515
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.306032	0.267380	13.7035
Brunei	Dollar	0.628187	0.548847	28.1290
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000112	0.000098	0.0050
Thailand	Baht	0.026270	0.022952	1.1763
UAE	Dirham	0.311699	0.272331	13.9572
Korea	Won	0.000877	0.000766	0.0393
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.873700	44.7780
Brazil	Real	0.472177	0.412541	21.1431
Denmark	Kroner	0.134330	0.117364	6.0150
India	Rupee	0.023550	0.020576	1.0545
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.301278	0.263227	13.4906
Mexico	New Peso	0.126470	0.110497	5.6631
New Zealand	Dollar	0.483343	0.422297	21.6431
Norway	Kroner	0.128914	0.112632	5.7725
Pakistan	Rupee	0.019107	0.016694	0.8556
South Africa	Rand	0.100251	0.087589	4.4890
Sweden	Kroner	0.108907	0.095152	4.8766
Syria	Pound	0.022311	0.019493	0.9990
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.032701	0.028571	1.4643
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001272	0.001111	0.0569

STOCK MARKET

Shares rise 1.6%

SHARE prices rose 1.6 percent yesterday on a recent cut in key interest rates and continued optimism over the country's economic prospects, analysts said.

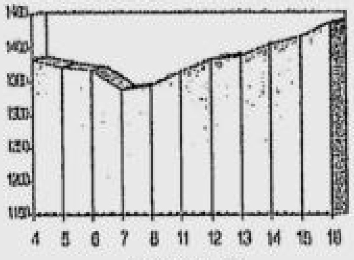
The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended up 22 points, or 1.6 percent, at 1438.83, its highest closing level since June 22, 2001, when it finished at 1439.71. Friday, the market rose 0.7 percent. The index has gained 7.4 percent since Feb. 8.

Gainers swamped losers 71 to 24, while the prices of 34 issues were unchanged.

Since the start of the year, Manila's main index has risen more than 23 percent on prospects of a better economy, declining local interest rates and hopes that the government would finally stamp out the kidnap-for-ransom Abu Sayyaf guerrillas with more equipment and training of local troops by US forces.

Property stocks dominated market action, as real estate demand traditionally improves during a period of low interest rates, traders said. *AP, AFP, Reuters*

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Ayala Land eyes middle-income mart

PROPERTY giant Ayala Land Inc. is set to venture into the middle-income urban housing market starting this year and is set to launch a new subsidiary to focus on opportunities from this segment.

ALI, which has earmarked about P6.5 billion for expansion this year as against the P2.5 billion spent in 2001, said it was planning to tap new markets this year, thus diversifying from its traditional businesses of upscale residential and commercial development.

"A new strategic business unit known as the core-mid group will launch early this year a subdivision project in Cavite offering lots, as well as house-and-lot packages," ALI vice president and comptroller Jaime Ysmael told the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The middle-income market is usually defined as the segment of the population which can afford housing units worth P500,000 to P3 million.

As such, ALI officials said the company believed that there was a lot of untapped opportunity in the middle income market.

ALI is thus seen to henceforth pose stiffer competition to other publicly listed property firms that are currently catering to the middle income market like Filinvest Land Inc., Empire East Land Holdings Inc., Fil-Estate Land Inc., City & Land Developers Inc. and C&P Homes Inc.

As its first undertaking for this year, however, ALI is set to launch upscale One Legazpi Park, a 365-unit residential building within Makati.

In 2001, condominium sales accounted for 13 percent of ALI's consolidated revenues while rental operations, mostly from office buildings and malls, became the biggest earner with a 27-percent contribution. On the other hand, land sales, construction and hotel operations contributed 18 percent, 13 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

INTEREST RATES

February 18, 2002

PARTICULARS	Today	Previous Day	Week Ago	Month Ago	Year Ago
Bangko Sentral R/P Rates (% p.a.) 1/ 15 February 2002					
Overnight R/P	9.5000	9.7500	9.7500	9.7500	13.2500
Term R/P	9.6250	9.8750	9.8750	9.8750	13.3750
Bangko Sentral R/P Rates (% p.a.) 1/ 15 February 2002					
Overnight R/P	7.2500	7.5000	7.5000	7.5000	11.0000
Term R/P	9.6250	7.3750	7.6250	7.6250	11.1250
Interbank Call Loan Rate (% p.a.) 15 February 2002					
Weighted Ave.	7.3750	7.6250	7.5938	7.6250	11.1250
High	8.0000	7.7500	7.7500	7.7500	11.2500
Low	7.2500	7.5000	7.5000	7.5625	11.0625
Foreign Interest Rates (% p.a.)					
90-day LIBOR	1.9100	1.9100	1.9000	1.7700	5.4100
90-day SIBOR	1.9100	1.9200	1.9000	1.7700	5.4000
180-day LIBOR	2.0600	2.0500	2.0200	1.8800	5.3000
180-day SIBOR	2.0500	2.0600	2.0000	1.9800	5.3000

Bangko Sentral to limit role of banks in AMCs

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has prohibited banks from forming joint ventures with asset management companies that plan to deal with their own bad loans.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said the central bank was also trying to convince Congress to prohibit banks from getting the incentives for AMCs unless an independent asset management firm would handle the disposal and collection of their non-performing loans and assets.

"Banks are required to seek approval (of the BSP) before they can enter into joint venture. We would not allow them," he said.

Reyes said the pending bills on AMCs were silent on whether a bank was entitled to the incentives like the exemption from the capital gains tax and relaxed provision on land ownership if it would be part of a spin-off company that would address its own NPL problem.

"From a regulatory standpoint, the BSP would not allow it because the AMC should be independent from the bank. Otherwise, the bad loans and assets would just be transferred from one entity to another and the bank would remain vulnerable," he said.

Reyes explained that banks that would choose to form joint ventures with AMCs or special purpose asset vehicles as part of their business expansion and would manage NPLs of other lenders would be allowed.

Lenders like the state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines are objecting to the central bank policy, saying that banks that wanted to form joint ventures with AMCs were those seeking to share in the upside of the asset management firm.

"We want a mechanism that would allow us to share in the upside of the AMC so that when the assets are sold at a higher rate, we could also get some of the profits considering that we would be selling the NPLs at a huge discount," said Alfonso Cruz, executive vice president of Landbank.

Cruz said AMCs would like to buy the NPLs at a discount of 70 to 80 percent. This means banks could only recover 20 percent of the cost of a soured loan or foreclosed asset.

So far, only the Metrobank Group has sold about half of its soured loans to an AMC. Lehman Brothers bought P15 billion of Metrobank's P33 billion worth of NPLs.

BANGKO/ B4

MOBILE PHONE-BASED BILLING SCHEME

Smart Communications Inc. and the Bureau of Customs have teamed up to develop the first mobile phone-based billing and payment of duties and taxes. The undertaking is part of the BOC's M-governance project, which seeks to modernize its revenue collection and cargo clearance issuance. The project will be using Smart's Mobile Commerce Platform, through which importers and brokers can file their entry electronically, and Smart Money, which is an electronic cash card linked to a mobile phone. At the launching during the BOC's Centennial Day celebration are Napoleon L. Nazareno, Smart president and CEO, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Customs Commissioner Titus Villanueva.

JAPAN VISIT

Bush sees signs of US recovery

TOKYO—President Bush said yesterday he saw signs of a recovery in the US economy and he was confident in Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's strategy to lead Japan.

Speaking after a meeting with Koizumi on the second day of a three-day visit to Japan, Bush said the implementation of a Japanese reform strategy would help Japan and the world economy.

"I told him that our economy is still in recession but that there are some hopeful signs that we are recovering. There are some signs that the tax relief plan that we put in place is having an effect. So that we are beginning to see some growth."

He said Koizumi had briefed him on the problems of bad loans weighing down Japanese banks, on regulatory issues and the problem of deflation.

Earlier, Bush called Koizumi a "great reformer" and was quoted by local media as telling Koizumi that a strong Japanese economy was important for the global economy.

Koizumi said he would take all possible steps to tackle deflation and prevent a financial crisis, and that visiting President Bush had supported for his reform agenda.

"Regarding deflation steps and measures to prevent a financial crisis, I will tackle them firmly. I will take all possible measures," Koizumi said a news conference with Bush.

"I will not loosen the reins on structural reform," Koizumi said. "There's absolutely no change in that path. My resolve has not been shaken, I expressed."

Koizumi also said Japan was losing confidence in itself.

"Ten years ago we were over-confident. Now we've lost confidence. But I would like to tackle structural reform with confidence and with hope," he said.

Koizumi is due to unveil a set of measures to combat deflation and promote the disposal of banks' bad loans by the end of February in the hope this will stimulate the economy, which is now in its third recession in a decade.

Reuters, AP

PEACe bonds stir political, financial storm

By Margarita H. Debuque
(First of a series)

SPECIAL REPORT

POLITICIANS from the opposition party see the center of the Peace bonds controversy as nothing but a scam, the execution of which implied the participation of, "at the very least," the finance secretary, whose government appointment they refuse to confirm. Despite noble intentions, a number from the development community view their fellow NGO's hushed entry into the capital markets as an offense "no different from crony capitalism and political patronage."

Rather than promoting calm, as the name of the financial instrument involved suggests, the issuance of Peace bonds has created a maelstrom in the country's halls of power and within civil society.

The agitation is hardly surprising. After all, the backdrop for the Caucus of Development NGO Networks' (CODE-NGO's) scheme to raise funds for its poverty-alleviation projects by trading the controversial debt papers provides a plausible setting for a scandal.

CODE-NGO, which had been instrumental in toppling the Estrada administration, netted nearly P1.4 billion from the purchase and sale of Peace bonds last year, a dizzying amount for a supposedly non-profit organization with very limited monetary and technical resources.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC) and RCBC Capital, private firms that served as the network's official agent bank and underwriter of the transaction, respectively, not only allowed their client to reap huge profits by putting up the cash but in an uncharacteristically generous gesture also tolerated what appeared to many as a lopsided contract given prevailing bond market rates.

Among the officials representing the network of NGOs in its negotiations with government agencies was its chairperson, Ma. Socorro Camacho-Reyes or Marissa, sister of Jose Isidro Camacho who took the helm of the Department of Finance (DOF) last June. The Bureau of Treasury (BOT), which is responsible for the national government's local borrowings, falls directly under the supervision of the DOF.

Peace bonds are actually based

PEACE/ B4

EDEZA

CAMACHO-REYES

Market my word

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

A STAFF member of a certain senator asked my friend a difficult question. Of course my friend could not answer it. He therefore wasted no time in relaying it to me. I actually found out about it from other sources.

Do I have a problem, the question goes, with those senators who are only investigating the zero coupon bonds for the good of the country, not for political reasons and not even for personal vendetta? Tough one, huh!

If that's what you really want, all right. Mark my word, from now on I promise to do nothing else but kiss our senators' fat posteriors. After all, it's only your tax money that the senators are wasting. Let's see how you like it.

* * *

WE are such a lucky people. All our legislators put the interest of the country above politics. They work very hard. As a result, they are able to pass countless number of laws.

Our legislators try to make do with a little budget of billions of pesos to do their job of passing laws. As of today they have passed an amazing total of . . . two laws.

Moreover, they put so much work on the laws they crafted, only one of the two, which was the anti-money laundering law, was rejected by the international community.

Without any additional budget, our legislators also investigate other things. They may soon explain the living habits of several thousand different species of ants.

I can see that you are retching already. What more if I lick the ugly, flabby body parts of those senators? I don't want to find out what you had for breakfast, okay?

* * *

BIG figures in banking now also want to attend the confirmation hearings at the Senate, if only to show their support for Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho.

Two senators have a problem with the Whiz, as Camacho is more popularly known in my clan. They are bullying, este, burying him on the zero coupon bonds.

Now all the bankers I've talked to—and I've covered banking for the past 20 years—have said that everything about the bonds, at least based on the hearings so far, looks legitimate.

The only problem, according to them, is the Whiz's lack of political sense. He has no political bone in his body. In short, he does not dance to the music. So what's wrong with that?

* * *

WELL, my contacts say the Whiz could have smelled politics in those zero coupon bonds right from the start. The biggest industry in this country, after all, is politics.

Being in government, even as a technocrat, means he cannot escape politics. Government is about politics. Thus business wants the Whiz to learn the political ropes.

He has to, if only to untangle himself from political knots. Yet, they say, he must also still not dance. I just don't know how he can do it. In politics, everybody dances.

* * *

ON A MORE recent issue, the Whiz wants Land Bank to cut its loan rates. Does he want Land Bank to lose money? Of course not. His reason is simple. Government banks must set the example. Hopefully, other banks will follow.

As you know, the DTI is waving a survey in the faces of the banks. It shows many of them charge way too much for loans to small and medium sized business.

But this cute administration, or even the Bangko Sentral, cannot really force the banks to cut loan rates. After all, despite their high charges, the banks still have takers for the loans. Indeed, loan rates go as high as the market can take.

Apparently, through government banks such as Land Bank, the Whiz gives word they should play the other banks in their market game. What's that—market my word?

* * *

ANYWAY, things are a bit trickier than market forces. In size, for instance, Land Bank can hardly match the big private banks. Land Bank's cut in its lending rates can be just a tiny little whisper in the wilderness of high loan rates.

Sure, some bankers say that, being a government bank, Land Bank has an advantage. Government offices have no choice but to deposit funds with Land Bank.

In such a captive market, Land Bank can then dictate upon the government agencies the interest rate on their deposits. Low cost of funds, for Land Bank, equals low loan rates. Other banks don't have the same source of cheap funds.

Not so fast, according to Gary Teves, CEO and president of Land Bank, who claims that the bank has big hidden costs. A lot of it is also political cost.

* * *

TEVES says Land Bank must set aside, as reserve, half of all the deposits of government offices. Other banks don't have to do that. Teves says that Land Bank's cost of funds is thus even higher than those of private banks.

Also, Land Bank incurs hidden costs in the land reform program of the national government. It advances, for the government, billions upon billions for the program.

This year, Land Bank needs close to P10 billion for the program. Luckily, to cover for it, the government gave the bank only P3 billion. How do you run a bank that way? No wonder Teves works in the bank 12 hours a day.

* * *

CONFIDENCE, to me, is not just an idea. It's not as if you can liken confidence to platonic love or sexual fantasy. Confidence is not just all in the mind. It is real.

Business people also make money out of it. Or to be more precise, they save a lot of money because of the return of confidence in business.

A good example is the case of Metro Rail Transit Corp. The firm just closed a $170-million deal with a German group to finance the Edsa-MRT extension project.

MRGC's boss-chief, John Robert Sobrepeña, who also chairs the Fil-Estate Group, says that only a few months ago the same financier was dribbling him.

* * *

SURE, the German group expressed interest in the project. They were so interested, they only demanded high interest. Despite the high rates, they were on a wait-and-see mode.

Wait-and-see, in business, is like love to a senator who reportedly got a staff member of his just a little pregnant. In both, there's not much action.

Sobrepeña says that, all of a sudden, the German group became eager to close the deal. They wanted to close it right away.

He also reveals that MRTC got an interest rate cut. It's only more than two percentage points less, or only hundreds of million of pesos! Now, that's called confidence.

Filinvest sets ₱1-B expansion

By Doris C. Dumlao

PROPERTY developer Filinvest Land Inc. has earmarked over P1 billion to expand its operations this year, as it expects its core business—middle-income housing—to gain from the prevailing low interest rates and improving investor sentiment.

In an interview yesterday, Filinvest investor relations officer Fely Ramos said the company was expecting sales to grow by 20 percent to 25 percent this year over last year.

Ramos said based on preliminary figures, Filinvest probably chalked up some P559 million in net earnings last year, slightly down from P573 million in 2000.

She said without its extraordinary earnings from socialized housing, a segment pushed by the administration of former President Joseph Estrada, Filinvest would have recorded flat growth in 2001.

The outlook this year has improved, especially for the middle-income market, which has accounted for about 90 percent of the company's revenues, she said.

Ramos disclosed that Filinvest was planning to spend over P1 billion this year to develop 20 projects, four of which were new ventures.

She said the budget excluded land acquisition costs as Filinvest still had about 2,600 hectares that it could still develop.

The company also set aside some P1 billion for its capital expenditures last year but spent only between P750 million and P800 million.

Among the new projects in Filinvest's priority list this year is the 183-ha. Nasadua residential farm estate project in Tanza, Cavite. There are 1,372 potential units to be sold at a price of P1,500 to P1,700 per square meter.

Another new project is the 9-ha. South Hampton English-inspired residential housing in San Pedro, Laguna. Ramos said the units would be offered at a more affordable price range of P500,000 to P1.7 million.

"We are still concentrating on the middle-income market, with units priced between P500,000 and P2.8 million," Ramos said.

Trade, SEC plan single business name system

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry and Securities and Exchange Commission are working together to harmonize their business name registration services to speed up the processing of business documents.

Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II said the trade department and SEC were moving to have a single filing process that would help new business applicants in registering their names.

Roxas noted that most business applicants questioned the need to register with both the DTI and SEC, which would require additional time, effort and costs.

Under existing regulations, single proprietorships need only to register with the trade department.

Partnerships, corporations, cooperatives and other entities require SEC registration.

"We decided to do away with the dual registration by computerizing our registration process. At the end of the day, new business applicants would have to register their businesses with only one agency," Roxas said.

Roxas said this was part of the government's efforts to cut down on the cost of doing business in the country and hasten the business application process to attract more investors.

The consolidation of business name registration services of the trade department and the SEC is also expected to generate significant savings for the government. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

DISCLOSURES

DIGITAL Telecommunications Philippines Inc. has clarified that it is proceeding with the soft launch of its mobile phone operations as scheduled. The company also denied that two prospective partners—a brokerage and a cellular operator—concluded a due diligence in the second half of last year.

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SUN Life Financial Services of Canada Inc. has declared a 14-Canadian-cent-per-share cash dividend in favor of shareholders as of Feb. 26 payable on March 31.

* * *

FILSYN Corp. has entered into a stock and transfer agency agreement with **Equitable PCI Bank Inc.**

* * *

GLOBAL Equities Inc. has announced the resignation of Gloria Tan Climaco as director after she was appointed presidential adviser to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

* * *

FIDELITY Securities Inc. is the new stock and transfer agent of **MRC Allied Industry Inc.**

* * *

THE VENUE of **Interport Resources Corp.**'s annual stockholders' meeting was changed from the Eastridge clubhouse in Rizal to the Greenmeadows clubhouse in Quezon City.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday, February 18, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	3,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	67.5	68	67.5	67.5	414,100
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	6,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	29.5	30.5	29	30.5	834,800
First E-Bank Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	20,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	212	215	209	213	375,030
Philippine National Bank	75	75	75	75	3,800
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.25	13.25	13	13.25	38,700
Security Bank Corp.	19	19.25	19	19	60,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	20	21.5	20	21.25	195,700
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.3	1.42	1.3	1.4	2,320,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1345	1350	1345	1350	4,700
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1030	1030	1030	1030	370
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	31	31.5	31	31.5	20,900
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.68	0.69	7,940,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	800	800	795	800	10,650
Ipeople Inc.	0.78	0.82	0.78	0.82	60,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0725	0.0875	0.0625	0.085	126,300,000
Piltel	0.57	0.6	0.57	0.59	10,250,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	515	515	510	510	150,890
Ivantage Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	1,850,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.022	0.023	0.022	0.023	129,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	30.5	31	30	31	468,100
Manila Electric Co. B	45	47	45	46.5	1,099,500
Petron Corp.	1.96	2.06	1.96	2.06	26,308,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	120,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.1	2,915,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCT			S		
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	910,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	21,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	5,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	10,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.25	1,880,300
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	23.75	24	23.75	24	276,000
RFM Corp.	1.4	1.46	1.4	1.4	2,404,000
San Miguel Corp. A	50	50	49.5	49.5	125,400
San Miguel Corp. B	66	66	65.5	65.5	155,300
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	11,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg. A	0.71	0.72	0.71	0.71	180,000
Ayala Corp.	6.6	7	6.6	7	5,486,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.92	1.94	1.9	1.94	665,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.75	12	11.75	12	900
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.88	0.85	0.86	760,000
APC Group Inc.	0.11	0.13	0.11	0.13	600,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	17,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.3	0.37	0.3	0.37	3,490,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	25,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	100,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.86	0.93	0.86	0.93	82,730,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	350,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.36	0.39	0.36	0.38	5,780,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	6,400,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.035	0.035	0.032	0.032	300,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	20,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.08	1.12	2,800,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2.8	3	2.8	2.9	8,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	31	31.5	31	31	304,300
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	10,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.175	0.185	280,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	1,000,000
Ionics Inc.	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.5	6,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.92	1.92	1.9	1.92	470,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	135,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.02	6,100,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.02	5,000,000
Medco Holdings	0.15	0.19	0.14	0.19	200,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.86	0.89	0.86	0.89	8,180,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.4	13,380,000
Music Corp.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	6,550,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	120,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.41	0.44	0.4	0.43	3,290,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.19	0.18	0.185	4,010,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	300,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	90,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	10,000
Pryce Corp.	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.115	9,110,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.75	14.75	14.5	14.5	205,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.46	0.51	0.46	0.51	99,920,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.63	0.66	0.63	0.65	3,890,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.42	0.45	0.42	0.45	300,000
Manila Jockey Club	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	11,900
Mondragon Intl. Phils. Inc.	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.54	1,140,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.3	150,000
Philippine Racing Club	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	10,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	31	32.5	31	32.5	276,600
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.74	1.8	1.74	1.8	33,000
Globe Telecom Hldg (Pdr)	790	790	790	790	300
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	0.0016	403,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	3,200
Philweb.Com,Inc -Warrants	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	129,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8	8	8	8	5,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.7	7	6.7	7	32,899,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	100,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.29	0.34	0.29	0.34	21,840,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.56	0.57	0.56	0.57	10,740,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.32	0.35	0.32	0.35	39,770,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.12	2.36	2.12	2.36	36,041,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	100,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	170,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.32	0.37	0.32	0.37	10,770,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	500,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.02	1.1	1.02	1.1	1,364,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.9	7.1	6.9	7.1	10,241,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.08	0.095	0.08	0.095	15,200,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.36	0.39	0.36	0.39	60,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	10,000,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	5,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.041	0.042	0.04	0.041	21,800,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.215	1,020,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.225	1,590,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	34,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	5,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	434,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.021	23,200,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.26	0.3	0.26	0.3	1,560,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.34	1,000,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.024	0.025	0.023	0.024	33,300,000
Interport Res.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	80,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.005	0.0065	0.005	0.005	44,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	84,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	10,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.33	0.33	0.3	0.31	390,000
Pacifica	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.019	50,300,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.095	0.1	0.095	0.1	2,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	740,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	4,376,700	148,855,865.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,136,078,340	511,854,885.00
PRO	179,835,000	414,371,360.00
Mining	533,235,000	5,193,200.00
OIL	304,730,000	3,559,700.00
GRAND TOTALS:	2,158,255,040	1,083,835,010.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	571.92	UP 5.40
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,964.88	UP 24.90
PRO	643.25	UP 26.63
Mining	1,428.76	UP 8.65
OIL	2.26	DOWN 0.04
All Shares Index	758.95	UP 3.36
Composite	1,438.83	UP 22.00

NO. OF ADVANCES: 71; NO. OF DECLINES: 24; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 34; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 129; NO. OF TRADES: 6,067

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Alabang Country Club "B"	1,800,000	1,700,000
Alta Vista	-	200,000
Baguio Country Club	740,000	600,000
Camp John Hay	300,000	250,000
Capitol Hills Golf & CC	130,000	115,000
Calatagan Golf	90,000	-
Canyon Woods	210,000	190,000
Canlubang	650,000	-
Celebrity Sports	230,000	170,000
City Sports Club	350,000	Pls. Call
Eagleridge "A"	-	330,000
Eastridge	200,000	-
Evercrest	100,000	90,000
Fontana D/C	90,000/140,000	Pls. Call
Forest Hills "A"	250,000	200,000
Forest Hills "B"	300,000	-
Luisita Golf	300,000	-
Manila Polo	-	2,550,000
Manila Golf	11,000,000	-
Makati Sports Club	300,000	250,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	700,000	620,000
Mimosa Golf / C3	170,000/350,000	120,000
Mt. Malarayat	-	350,000
Orchard	230,000	200,000
Orchard "B"	-	250,000
Phil. Columbian	-	60,000
Punta Fuego	650,000	500,000
Puerto Azul	170,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	240,000	200,000
Riviera Golf "A"	210,000	190,000
Riviera Golf "B"	-	250,000
Rockwell	400,000	360,000
Royale Tagaytay A/C	90,000/140,000	Pls. Call
Sherwoods A/B	120,000/130,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht Club "Corp"	400,000	Pls. Call
Subic Golf	160,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	-	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf & CC	85,000	600,000
Tagaytay Midlands	-	790,000
Valley Golf & CC	-	200,000
Valle Verde (Indv.)	175,000	150,000

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	SELLING	BUYING
1. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"		1,500,000
2. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"		1,550,000
3. BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	725,000	700,000
4. CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	100,000	80,000
5. CAMP JOHN HAY	300,000	
6. CANLUBANG GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	600,000	
7. CAPITOL HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	125,000	115,000
8. CELEBRITY CLUB	210,000	180,000
9. COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	380,000	350,000
10. CLUB FILIPINO	210,000	
11. EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	200,000	
12. EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	350,000	340,000
13. EVERCREST GOLF CLUB "A"	100,000	
14. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	230,000	210,000
15. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	260,000	
16. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	500,000	
17. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	280,000	250,000
18. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	400,000	
19. MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)	12,500,000	11,000,000
20. MANILA POLO CLUB	2,000,000	2,600,000
21. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	650,000	600,000
22. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	750,000	
23. METROPOLITAN CLUB "A"	140,000	
24. METROPOLITAN CLUB "B"	150,000	
25. MT. MALARAYAT GOLF CLUB (IND.)	400,000	330,000
26. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	220,000	200,000
27. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	300,000	250,000
28. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	370,000	
29. QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	225,000	200,000
30. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	220,000	190,000
31. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	260,000	230,000
32. STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"	1,700,000	1,500,000
33. SUBIC BAY YACHT CLUB (IND)	300,000	
34. TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INT'L. GOLF CLUB	850,000	760,000
35. TAGAYTAY MIDLAND	750,000	650,000
36. VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	170,000	
37. VALLEY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	240,000	220,000
38. WACK WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB		6,500,000

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NTC works on new service area scheme

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission is currently working on a successor to its service area scheme, as it admits the old scheme has become "illogical."

NTC Deputy Commissioner Armi Jane Borje said in an interview yesterday that a memorandum calling for the scrapping of the service area scheme had already been sent to Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez.

"We have to come up with a scheme to better address what we want done. The new scheme should fit with what's happening now. The service area scheme already served its purpose at the time it was conceived," she said.

The service area scheme, created by Executive Order 109, also known as the "Universal Telephone Service Policy," required operators seeking a cellular mobile telephone system license to roll out 400,000 landlines.

Those seeking a license to operate an international gateway facility, on the other hand, were required to install 300,000 landlines in specific areas.

Most of the carriers that were given licenses have met their obligations, but this has resulted in a landline glut that has left many of the telecommunications firms almost neck-deep in debts with hundreds of thousands of unused landlines.

In an earlier interview, NTC Chief Eliseo Rio Jr. said the service area scheme's successor would be "technology-neutral." Instead of a landline obligation, firms seeking licenses could roll out cell sites or other facilities relevant to their businesses.

The service area scheme also divided the country into a number of service areas to ensure that the communication liberalization program would benefit even unprofitable areas in the country.

Borje said out of the carriers that sought CMTS and IGF licenses almost seven years ago, only dominant carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. managed to comply with its service area assignments.

Also, telecommunication firms had to comply with a rule that required them to install one line in a rural area for every 10 lines that they installed in an urban area. None of them met this requirement.

Borje said the new scheme that the NTC was working would not totally scrap the service area scheme. It would "revisit" the existing scheme's logical terms, he said.

She added that while developing the new scheme, the NTC would also try to help telecommunication firms that complied with their landline obligations in any way they could.

"They can submit a proposal on how the NTC can help them," she said.

Lopez-owned Bayan Telecommunications Inc. and PLDT subsidiary Pilipino Telephone Corp. are among those that incurred huge debts in their bid to meet all their obligations.

Blackout cost ₱70M, —Napocor

THE NATIONAL Power Corp. yesterday reported it lost some P70.6 million during the Luzon-wide blackout on Jan. 21.

Napocor's system operations department said the loss represented an increase in the power firm's operating expense for oil-fired power plants that had to be run.

Napocor had to turn to its oil-fired power plants to cover up for the facilities it temporarily lost because of an accident that tripped its transmission lines and caused a Luzon-wide power outage.

"Start up costs alone for these power plants reached millions of pesos," Napocor reported.

It said starting up the 620-megawatt Bataan power complex in Limay cost about P2.06 million. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

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Alabang CC B	-	1,500,000
Alta Vista (Indv.)	300,000	Pls. Call
Alta Vista Corp.	-	Pls. Call
Canlubang	Pls. Call	500,000
Canyon Woods	250,000	Pls. Call
Capitol Hills	Pls. Call	120,000
Club Filipino	230,000	-
The Country Club	4,500,000	-
Eagleridge	Pls. Call	350,000
Eagleridge B	400,000	Pls. Call
Eastridge	180,000	-
Filipinas Golf	300,000	-
Fontana C	120,000	-
Fontana D	80,000	-
Forest Hills A	Pls. Call	210,000
Forest Hills C	400,000	-
Manila Golf (Indv.)	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Golf Corp.	Pls. Call	12,000,000
Manila Southwoods A	650,000	Pls. Call
Malarayat	390,000	350,000
Mimosa	190,000	-
Orchard	Pls. Call	200,000
Punta Fuego	700,000	Pls. Call
Riviera	250,000	190,000
Sherwood	150,000	-
Sta. Elena A	Pls. Call	1,500,000
Sta. Elena B	-	1,650,000
Subic Golf	310,000	-
Tagaytay CC	.370,000	360,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	700,000
Tagaytay Midlands	-	720,000
Tivoli Royale	150,000	-
Valley Golf	Pls Call	220,000

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ALTA VISTA A/B*	-	450,000/550,000*
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	700,000	750,000
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB A/B*	-	100,000/105,000*
CAMP JOHN HAY	255,000	260,000
CANLUBANG	-	700,000
CAPITOL HILLS	120,000	125,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	190,000	200,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	620,000**	350,000/450,000*/700,000**
EVERCREST A/B*	135,000*	100,000
FONTANA D/C*/B**	-	90,000/150,000*/280,000**
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	200,000	230,000/300,000*/325,000**
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	250,000	275,000/325,000*
MANILA POLO CLUB	2,550,000	2,700,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	630,000	670,000/700,000*
METROPOLITAN A/B*	-	120,000/125,000*
MIMOSA IND./C2*/C3**	155,000/235,000*/265,000**	160,000/250,000*/300,000*
MT. MALARAYAT A/C*	600,000*	400,000/625,000*
ORCHARD A/B*/C**	200,000	250,000/350,000*/425,000**
PUERTO AZUL A	115,000	125,000
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	200,000	220,000
RIVIERA A/B*	-	195,000/400,000*
ROCKWELL CLUB	-	550,000
ROYALE TAGAYTAY A/B*/C**	-	110,000/150,000*/180,000**
SHERWOOD HILLS A/B*/C**	-	150,000/250,000*/350,000**
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB A	-	1,650,000
SUBIC BAY IND./CORP.*	-	200,000/250,000*
TAT FILIPINAS GOLF A/B*	-	350,000/550,000*
TAGAYTAY HIGHLAND CC/GOLF*	360,000/800,000*	365,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	730,000	-
VALLEY VERDE IND.	-	165,000
VALLEY GOLF	225,000	-

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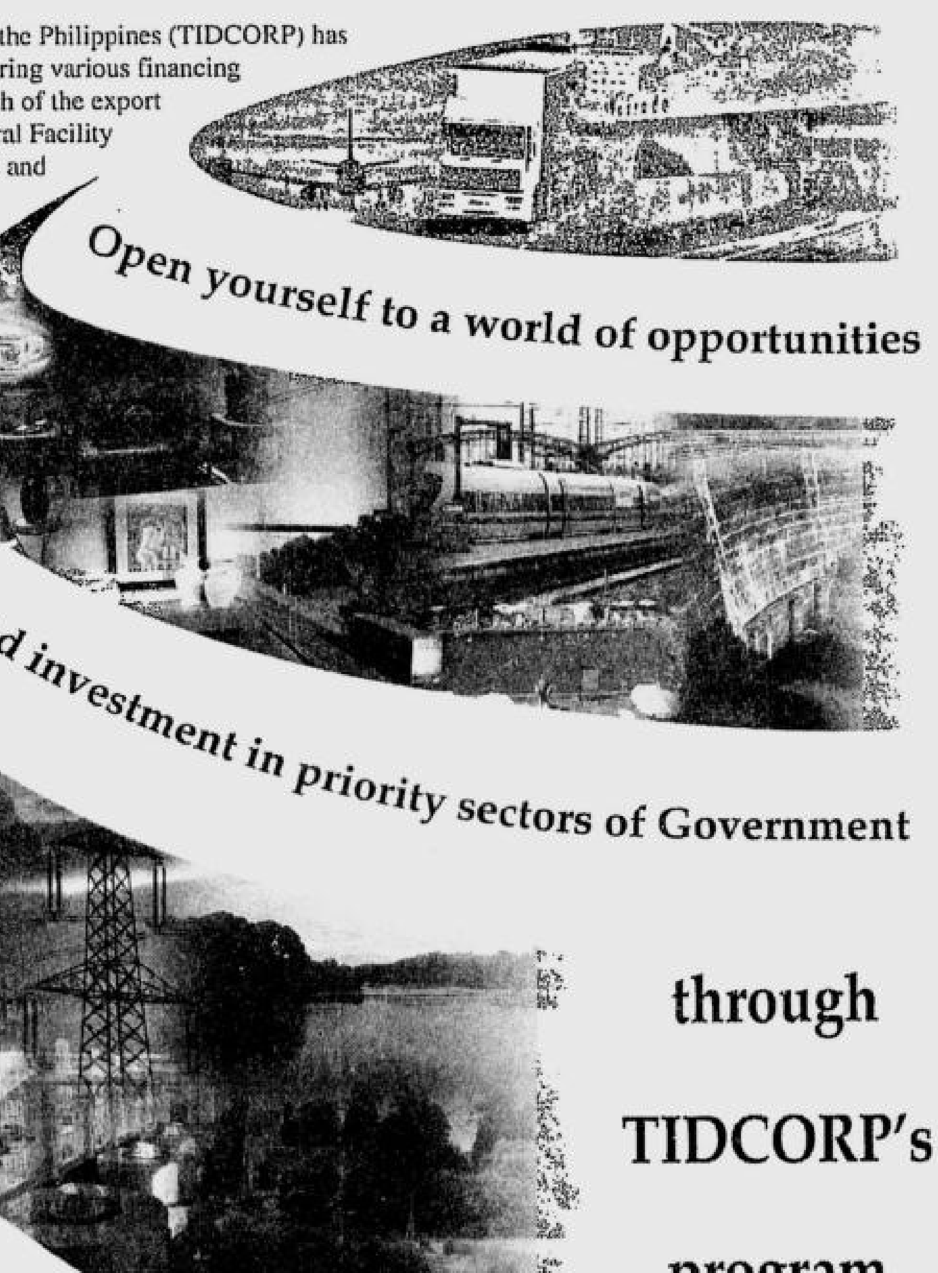
For the past 25 years, the Trade and Investment Development Corporation of the Philippines (TIDCORP) has transformed itself into a financially viable export-import credit agency and is now offering various financing programs particularly guarantees and insurance coverage to support not only the growth of the export sector but also the development of priority sectors of the government. Under its General Facility Program (GFP), TIDCORP can guarantee up to 100 percent of loans of large exporters and other enterprises to finance the export, manufacture, rendering of services and/or any other activity which promotes the export and import substitution industries; as well as foreign loans to finance development projects, export-oriented industries, BOI-registered firms, public utilities and other industries encouraged by government policy.

Consistent with the government's priorities, TIDCORP provides guarantee facilities to support four identified strategic areas, as follows: • Information and Communication Technology (ICT) projects which include development of Cyber or IT Parks dedicated to IT locators, and other IT-based or IT-related projects • Tourism-related projects like hotel; resort, eco-tourism projects, sports and leisure complex in priority areas under the Governmentfs Tourism Development Plan • Infrastructure projects such as tollways, ports, airports, water systems, railway systems, and power generation • Agricultural Modernization projects such as integrated mechanized farm production and bulk handling facilities, oleochemical facility, grains production and post-harvest system.

Likewise, TIDCORP offers a Term Loan Guarantee Programwhich is designed to provide guarantee cover to medium- and long-term loans of up to P50 Million extended by PFIs to medium and large exporters for the purchase of machinery and equipment for plant/building acquisition, construction, improvement, expansion, for acquisition of land as project site (not exceeding 50 percent of the loan), and for working capital.

For short-term trade financing requirements of large exporters, TIDCORP offers the Omnibus Line Guarantee Facility (OL-GFP) which provides 70% guarantee cover on the maximum loanable amount of P50 Million per eligible borrower.

Another program being offered by TIDCORP to large exporters is the Export Credit Insurance (ECI) Program which provides protection to exporters against risk of non-payment by foreign buyers of export shipment on credit. By this assurance of payment, TIDCORP aims to embolden exporters to sell more on credit to foreign buyers, and consequently develop new buyers and markets. Selling their products on credit terms would render Philippine exporters at par with their competitors abroad. The ECI protects the exporter from commercial risk of buyer bankruptcy or insolvency and protracted delays in payment. Exporters are also protected from political risks such as currency inconvertibility and transfer risks, importation bans, import license cancellations, war and other civil disturbances. With the above programs, TIDCORP reaffirms its commitment to facilitate the inflow of credits and investments for export and other developmental purposes.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PEACe bonds stir political, financial storm

From page B1

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CODE-NGO's particularly brazen manner toward securing the special government issues underlying its Peace bonds is perhaps the root of the severe criticism it receives today. The organization had initially tried to negotiate a deal with the Macapagal administration to be the sole dealers of the 10-year instruments with special profit-enhancing features, a move that has only served to blemish its reputation.

The original set of proposals basically involved the exclusive issuance of long-term zero coupon treasury notes that, under a firm underwriting agreement with a reputable financial institution (which means no cash out by the NGO), the group can in turn sell to prospective investors at a reasonable profit. The avowed purpose was to generate a permanent endowment fund (earlier identified as the Hanap Buhay Fund) to finance the NGO's livelihood projects and contribute to the government's anti-poverty campaign. This fund, based on various proposals, was targeted to exceed P1 billion.

The version of the proposal that landed on the desk of then Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo in March last year, which was handed down to the treasury for perusal, entailed the government's issuance of 10-year zero coupon treasury notes that were tax-exempt and eligible for certain uses such as for bank reserves. CODE-NGO in essence wanted the BOT to sell to them exclusively P30 billion worth of these special issues at a discounted price of P7.1 billion (equivalent to a yield of about 15.5 percent annually) through a special purpose vehicle.

In turn, this vehicle will issue participation certificates, or PEACe bonds, through its underwriter RCBC Capital, which had apparently committed to buy the zeroes at a price that translated to an interest rate of about 11.6 percent. The sale was estimated to generate about P10 billion and thus create a margin of slightly below P3 billion (P2.9 billion less underwriting fees) that will mainly go to the NGO's perpetual fund.

The treasury, however, refused to implement this scheme. "This proposal, which they presented around March (23), we did not even give consideration to for the simple reason that, one, CODE-NGO was not a government securities eligible dealer (GSED) or even a financial institution and, two, because there was no way to establish a price that will be very transparent to the market since this is the first time we are issuing this bond, " said National Treasurer Sergio Edeza.

Auction

In a letter he wrote to the finance secretary dated July 4, he recommended that the bond issuance be auctioned and that the group link up with a certified dealer to bid in its behalf, noting that a negotiated sale would raise various concerns relating to transparency, bond pricing, extent of national government liability in the case of default by the NGO, and tax treatment.

Officials of CODE-NGO claim that they were simply under the impression that a negotiated sale was neither illegal nor unethical. "The reason why we agreed to the proposal for a negotiated sale (is) it was advised to us by our financial advisers and RCBC and because there are precedents," said Danilo Songco, the group's national coordinator. "We were informed that this (negotiated sale) was the normal course of business of Treasury, that there was nothing wrong or unusual about it."

True enough, specific rulings of the finance department (DoF Order No. 141-95) allow negotiated sales of government securities to be executed by the BTR provided there is a clear market benchmark for the rates and that the party involved is either a GSED or a financial institution. This mode is often applied in situations when the government wishes to quickly raise financing without prompting the market to speculate against the issuer and thus move the rates upward as well as in cases where offers that are clearly advantageous to the country are made directly to the treasury.

Such deals were entered into in the past particularly during the Estrada administration when former National Treasurer Leonor Briones asked for an amendment of the existing rules and added a "negotiated tap window" to the bureau's normal tap window. This mode was suspended in May of 2001 as one bank complained that market players were not informed of the existence of such a window while others insinuated that the government had played favorites in the past. This type of financing was resorted to later that same year but was again subsequently suspended.

Aggressive stance

CODE-NGO officials admit they had been very aggressive in pursuing the project because they were aware of the problem of dwindling funds not just within their own organization but also within the entire NGO community. Even before this particular venture, they already employed innovative ways to shore up funds for development projects, arranging debt-swap arrangements such as a $25-million debt-for-nature swap with the USAID in 1993 and a $25-million debt-for-development swap with Swiss NGOs in 1995.

Their gamble with PEACe bonds began in February last year when they linked up with financial consultancy firms Capex Ventures Inc. (headed by finance practitioner Red Mayo) and Seed Ventures Capital Inc. (headed by Bobby Guevarra, from the clan that owned the DMG group of companies). CODE-NGO's financial advisers not only designed the bonds but also peddled the idea to various financial institutions and, in the course of their dealings with the government, advanced the money needed to hire corporate lawyers and tax consultants to expedite the required paperwork.

Sources in the banking industry say the group showed versions of the scheme to both private and government financial institutions, but most were unwilling to assume the project given its "doubtful nature" as it entailed exclusive issuance of government securities to the NGO, which was not a certified dealer.

CODE-NGO was finally able to snag a contract with the RCBC group in March, the details of which formed the backbone of its proposals to the government. Songco narrated that when their financial advisers approached RCBC and presented the transaction, which basically involved the purchase and sale of zero coupon bonds loaded with certain eligibilities, the bank after some computations immediately put a price on the instruments. "Just one look at it (PEACe bonds), and they already knew how to price it," he said. "They (RCBC and RCBC Capital) already knew what to do with the bonds when we entered into an underwriting agreement."

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But zero coupon bonds, unlike the usual instruments issued by the national treasury, do not provide periodic (semi-annual) interest or coupon payments but are merely sold at a deep discount. The bondholder only realizes his gain at the date of maturity (after 10 years) when the government pays the entire face amount. This means that if the yield of the benchmark 10-year treasury bonds was further adjusted to account for the present value of coupon payments and made comparable with the yield of zero coupon bonds, the resulting rate would be clearly above 11.5 percent. Seen this way, RCBC's valuation of the PEACe bonds at 11.6 percent, from any banker's perspective, even a conservative one, seems reasonable.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that all Global Bank Retiro Branch Accts.of ADELINA G.MAYUGA was extrajudicially settled among her heirs as per Doc# 188, Page# 38 Book# CXLI, Series of 2002 of Notary Public Atemio C. Villas of Bohol - PDI 2/14,19,26,2002

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Bobby P. Ocampo has been the subject of a deed of Extra Judicial Settlement among heirs with Waiver of Rights under Doc. No. 172 & 173, Page No. 35, Book No. 02, Series of 2002 in the Notarial Registry of Atty. Severiano O. Orias PDI-Feb.19,26&Mar.5,2002

NOTICE OF LOSS

Lost ACR # E022516 issued to Joselinda T. See was lost.

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

Oh, St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God. I place in you all my interest and desires. Oh, St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your divine son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers. Oh, St. Joseph, I never weary contemplating you, and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me and ask Him to return the Kiss when I draw my dying breath. St. Joseph, Patron of departing souls - Pray for me.

This prayer was found in the fiftieth year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In 1505 it was sent from the Pope to Emperor Charles when he was going into battle. Whoever shall read this prayer or hear it or keep it about themselves, shall never die a sudden death, or be drowned, nor shall poison take effect on them; neither shall they fall into the hands of the enemy, or shall be burned in any fire or shall be overpowered in battle.

Say for nine mornings for anything you may desire. It has never been known to fail so be sure you really want what you ask.

PRAYER TO BLESSED MOTHER
(NEVER KNOWN TO FAIL)

O most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this necessity. Oh star of the sea help me and show me, herein you are my Mother Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech You from the bottom of My Heart to succor me in this necessity there are none that can withstand Your power. Oh show me herein You are Mother.

Oh Mary, conceived without sin. Pray for us who have recoursed to thee (3x).

Sweet Mother, I place this cause in Your hands (3x).

Thank you for Your mercy toward me and being mine.

Thank you Mama Mary for answering my prayers. Amen.

NOVENA TO THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND SAINT JUDE

May the most Sacred Heart of Jesus be praised, blessed, loved, adored and glorified throughout the whole world now and forever. Amen.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles, helper for the helpless, pray for us.

Say nine times a day for nine days. Prayer will be answered by the eighth day, it has never failed.

Thank you very much, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude, for favor granted.

Republic of the Philippines
MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT
EIGHT JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 14
Albuera, Leyte

Land Reg. Case No. 00-01

LRA Record No. N-73237

NOTICE OF INITIAL HEARING

To the Hon. Solicitor General, Office of the Solicitor General, 134 Amorsolo St. Legaspi Village, Makati City, the Director, Land Management Bureau, Escolta, Manila, the Regional Executive Director, Region VIII, DENR, Tacloban City, the Hon. Secretary, Department of Public Works and Highways, Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, Manila, [illegible] Secretary, Department of Agrarian Reform, PTA Bldg., Elliptical Road, Diliman, [illegible] Forest Management Bureau, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, both in Quezon City, [illegible] the Provincial Governor, the Provincial Prosecutor, the General Services Officer [illegible] Provincial Governor, the Provincial Prosecutor, the General Services Officer, the Provincial Engineer, the Public Works and Highways District Engineer, the CENR Officer, [illegible] Land Management Sector, Tacloban City, the Municipal Mayor, the Municipal [illegible] Albuera, Leyte, Elpedio Domingufo, Angel Senilo, Herminia Luchavez, Pacifico Luchavez, Salvador Luchavez, Rosalio Luchavez, Nicolas Paylado, Bienvenida Casane, Felomena Senilo, Leopoldo Domingufo, Teodoro Senilo, all in Damulaan, Albuera, Leyte **AND TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

An **Amended and Consolidated** application having been filed in the above entitled case by **PRYCE GASES, INCORPORATED**, Mohon, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental represented by their Atty-in-fact, Rudy Abuyog, Punta, Ormoc City thru Atty. Francisco H. Escaño, Jr., 417 Feliza Mejia Subdivision, Ormoc City praying for the registration and confirmation of the title to the following described lands with improvements thereon.

1. A parcel of land designated as Ap-08-000580 (Lot 4188, Cad. 655), situated in the Barangay of Damula-an, Municipality of Albuera, Province of Leyte, Island of Leyte. Bounded on the Southeast along line 1-2 by Lot 4202, on the Southwest along line 2-3 by Lot 4201, on the Northwest along line 3-4 by Lot 4189, and on the Northeast along line 4-1 by a National Road; all of Cad. 655, Albuera Cadastre, Albuera, Leyte. Beginning at a point marked "1" on plan being South degrees 35 minutes East, 5,740.99 meters from BLLM #1, Cad. 655, Albuera.

thence S 65 deg 01'W., 124.65 m. to point 2;
thence N 45 deg 25'W., 05.84 m. to point 3;
thence N 64 deg 02'E., 124.56 m. to point 4;
thence S 40 deg 39'E., 07.94 m. to point of

beginning, containing an area of **EIGHT HUNDRED NINETEEN (819) SQUARE METERS**, more or less. Bearings GRID. All corners are Old Points. Surveyed on July 7, 1975 by the Survey Party No. VIII-1(A) and was duly approved on February 28, 1990 by the Regional Executive Director, DENR, Region VIII, Tacloban City. This Advance Plan was prepared on March 16, 1999 by the Chief, Technical Services Section and was certified correct on June 3, 1999 by the Regional Technical Director, DENR-Land Management Service, Region VIII, Tacloban City.

2. A parcel of land designated as Ap-08-000584 (Lot 4189, Cad. 655), situated in the Barangay of Damula-an, Municipality of Albuera, Province of Leyte, Island of Leyte. Bounded on the Northeast along line 1-2 by a National Road, on the Southeast along line 2-3 by Lot 4188, on the Southwest along line 3-4 by Lot 4201, on the Northwest along line 4-1 by Lot 4190, all of Cad. 655, Albuera Cadastre, Albuera, Leyte. Beginning at a point marked "1" on plan being South 28 degrees 33 minutes East 5,735.57 meters from BLLM #1, Cad. 655, Albuera.

thence S 40 deg 48'E., 07.83 m. to point 2;
thence S 64 deg 02'W., 124.56 m. to point 3;
thence N 45 deg 00'W., 05.47 m. to point 4;
thence N 62 deg 56'E., 124.36 m. to point of

beginning, containing an area of **SEVEN HUNDRED NINETY FIVE (795) SQUARE METERS**, more or less. Bearings GRID. All corners are Old Points. Surveyed on July 7, 1975 by the Survey Party No. VIII-1(A) and was duly approved on February 28, 1990 by the Regional Executive Director, DENR, Region VIII, Tacloban City. This Advance Plan was prepared on March 15, 1999 by the Chief, Technical Services Section and was certified correct on June 3, 1999 by the Regional Technical Director, DENR-Land Management Services, Region VIII, Tacloban City.

3. A parcel of land designated as Ap-08-000550 (Lot 4201, Cad. 655), situated in the Barangay of Damula-an, Municipality of Albuera, Province of Leyte, Island of Leyte. Bounded on the East along line 1-2 by Lot 4315, on the Southeast along line 2-3 by Lot 4314, on the Southwest along lines 3-4-5-6-7 by Lot 4313, on the West along line 7-8 by Lot 4269, on the Northwest along line 8-9 by Lot 4200, corner 9 is common to Lot 4194, on the Northeast along lines 9-10-11 by Lot 4193, along line 11-12 by Lot 4192, along line 12-13 by Lot 4191, along line 13-14 by Lot 4190, along line 14-15 by Lot 4189, along line 15-16 by Lot 4188 and along line 16-1 by Lot 4202, all of Cad. 655, Albuera Cadastre, Albuera, Leyte. Beginning at a point marked "1" on plan being South 27 degrees 29 minutes East, 5,773.73 meters from BLLM #1, Cad. 655, Albuera.

thence S 43 deg 56'E., 03.62 m. to point 2;
thence S 47 deg 38'W., 105.67 m. to point 3;
thence N 28 deg 34'W., 06.90 m. to point 4;
thence N 06 deg 49'W., 31.86 m. to point 5;
thence N 08 deg 23'E., 13.51 m. to point 6;
thence N 36 deg 51'W., 32.87 m. to point 7;
thence N 31 deg 00'W., 03.01 m. to point 8;
thence N 45 deg 12'E., 65.50 m. to point 9;
thence N 10 deg 12'E., 03.72 m. to point 10;
thence S 45 deg 49'E., 01.59 m. to point 11;
thence S 44 deg 14'E., 05.86 m. to point 12;
thence S 45 deg 52'E., 05.66 m. to point 13;
thence S 43 deg 48'E., 05.75 m. to point 14;
thence S 45 deg 00'E., 05.47 m. to point 15;
thence S 45 deg 25'E., 05.84 m. to point 16;
thence S 47 deg 20'E., 41.72 m. to point of

beginning, containing an area of **SIX THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY SIX (6,286) SQUARE METERS**, more or less. Bearings Grid. All corners are Old Points. Surveyed on July 7, 1975 by the Survey Party No. VIII-1(A) and was duly approved on February 28, 1990 by the Regional Executive Director, DENR, Region VIII, Tacloban City. This Advance Plan was prepared on March 19, 1999 by the Chief, Technical Services Section and was certified correct on June 4, 1999 by the Regional Technical Director DENR-Land Management Service, Region VIII, Tacloban City.

4. A parcel of land designated as Lot 4308-B of the subdivision of plan Cad-08-006569-D, being a portion of Lot 4308, Cad. 655, situated in the Barangay of Damula-an, Municipality of Albuera, Province of Leyte, Island of Leyte. Bounded on the SW., along line 1-2 by Lot 4308-A of this subdivision, on the NW., along line 2-3 by Lot 4307, Cad. 655, on the NE., along lines 3-4-5 by Lot 4313, Cad. 655, on the SE., along line 5-6 by Lot 4312, Cad. 655, along lines 6-7-1 by Lot 4309, Cad. 655. Beginning at a point marked "1" on plan being S. 24 deg. 57'E., 5862.24 m. from BLLM #1, Cad. 655.

thence N 55 deg 32'W., 19.43 m. to point 2;
thence N 45 deg 49'E., 120.59 m. to point 3;
thence S 45 deg 00'E., 4.38 m. to point 4;
thence S 47 deg 56'E., 32.75 m. to point 5;
thence S 53 deg 50'W., 15.69 m. to point 6;
thence S 55 deg 01'W., 60.65 m. to point 7;
thence S 55 deg 43'W., 34.72 m. to point of

beginning, containing an area of **THREE THOUSAND NINETY EIGHT (3,098) SQUARE METERS**, more or less. All points referred to are indicated on plan and marked on the ground as follows: Point 1, 2 are P.S. cyl. conc. mons. 15x40 cm., and the rest are Old points. Bearings grid, date of original survey on Sept. 23, 1985 and the subdivision survey on April 14, 1999 by Geodetic Engineer Romulo M. Hilvano. Date of approval by the Regional Technical Director, DENR, LMS, Region 08, Tacloban City on Sept. 3, 1999.

5. A parcel of land designated as Lot 4309-B of the subdivision of Cad-08-006568-D, being a portion of Lot 4309, Cad. 655, situated in the barangay of Damula-an, City of Albuera, Province of Leyte, Island of Leyte. Bounded on the NW., along line 1-2 by Lot 4308, Cad. 655, on the NE., along line 2-3 by Lot 4311, Cad. 655, on the SE., along line 3-4 by Lot 4310, Cad. 655, and on the SW., along line 4-1 by Lot 4309-A of this subdivision. Beginning at a point marked "1" on plan being S. 24 deg. 57'E., 5862.24 m. from BLLM #1, Cad. 655.

thence N 55 deg 43'E., 34.72 m. to point 2;
thence S 43 deg 49'E., 30.38 m. to point 3;
thence S 54 deg 20'W., 30.99 m. to point 4;
thence N 50 deg 14'W., 31.91 m. to point of

beginning, containing an area of **NINE HUNDRED NINETY NINE (999) SQUARE METERS**, more or less. All points referred to are indicated on plan and marked on the ground as follows: Points 1 and 4 are P.S. cyl. conc. mons. 15x40 cm., and points 2 and 3 are Old points. Bearings grid, date of original survey on June 30, 1985 and the subdivision survey on April 14, 1999. Date of approval by the Regional Technical Director, DENR, LMS, Region 08, Tacloban City on Sept. 3, 1999.

6. A parcel of land designated as Lot 4310-B of the subdivision of Cad-08-006570-D, being a portion of Lot 4310, Cad. 655, situated in the Barangay of Damula-an, Municipality of Albuera, Province of Leyte, Island of Leyte. Bounded on the SW., along line 1-2 by Lot 4310-A of this subdivision, on the NW., along line 2-3 by Lot 4309, Cad. 655, along line 3-4 by Lot 4311, Cad. 655, and on the NW., and NE., along lines 4-5-6 by Lot 4312, Cad. 655, and on the SE., along in the barangay of Damula-an, Municipality of Albuera, Province of Leyte, Island of Leyte. Bounded on the SW., along line 1-2 by Lot 4310-A of this subdivision, on the NW., along line 2-3 by Lot 4309, Cad. 655, along line 3-4 by Lot 4311, Cad. 655, and on the NW., and NE., along lines 4-5-6 by Lot 4312, Cad. 655, and on the SE., along lines 6-1 by Lot 4340, Cad. 655. Beginning at a point marked "1" on plan being S. 25 deg. 12'E., 5920.95 m. from BLLM #1, Cad. 655.

thence N. 45 deg 47'W., 31.89 m. to point 2;
thence N 54 deg 20'E., 30.99 m. to point 3;
thence N 54 deg 45'E., 53.14 m. to point 4;
thence N 52 deg 22'E., 20.93 m. to point 5;
thence S 42 deg 23'E., 31.53 m. to point 6;
thence S 54 deg 07'W., 103.13 m. to point of

beginning, containing an area of **THREE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED THIRTY SIX (3,236) SQUARE METERS**, more or less. All points referred to are indicated on plan and marked on the ground as follows: Points 1, 2 are P.S. cyl. conc. mons. 15x40 cm. and the rest are Old points. Bearings Grid, date of original survey on September 23, 1985 – October 1, 1985 and the subdivision survey on April 24, 1999 by Geodetic Engineer Romulo M. Hilvano. Date of approval by the Regional Technical Director, DENR, LMS, Tacloban City, on September 3, 1999.

7. A parcel of land designated as Ap-08-000585 (Lot 4311, Cad. 655), situated in the Barangay of Damula-an, Municipality of Albuera, Province of Leyte, Island of Leyte. Bounded on the Southwest along line 1-2 by Lot 4309, on the Northwest along line 2-3 by Lot 4308, on the Northeast along line 3-4 by Lot 4312, and on the Southeast along line 4-1 by Lot 4310, all of Cad. 655, Albuera Cadastre, Albuera, Leyte. Beginning at a point marked "1" on plan being South 25 degrees 23 minutes East, 5,885.52 meters from BLLM #1, Cad. 655, Albuera.

thence N 43 deg 49'W., 30.38 m. to point 2;
thence N 55 deg 01'E., 60.65 m. to point 3;
thence S 29 deg 30'E., 29.91 m. to point 4;
thence S 54 deg 45'W., 53.14 m. to point of

beginning, containing an area of **ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED ONE (1,701) SQUARE METERS**, more or less. Bearings GRID. All corners are Old Points. Surveyed on July 7, 1975 by Survey Party No. VIII-1 (A) and was duly approved on February 28, 1990 by the Regional Executive Director, DENR, LMS, Region VIII, Tacloban City. This Advance Plan was prepared on March 11, 1999 by the Chief, Technical Services Section and was certified correct on June 3, 1999 by the Regional Technical Director, DENR, Land Management Service, Region VIII, Tacloban City.

8. A parcel of land designated as Ap-08-000587 (Lot 4312, Cad. 655), situated in the Barangay of Damula-an, Municipality of Albuera, Province of Leyte, Island of Leyte. Bounded on the Southwest along line 1-2 by Lot 4311, on the Northwest along line 2-3 by Lot 4308, along line 3-4 by Lot 4313, on the Northeast along lines 4-5-6 by Lot 4314, on the Southeast along line 6-7 by Lot 4340, and on the Southwest along lines 7-8-1 by Lot 4310, all of Cad. 655, Albuera Cadastre, Albuera, Leyte. Beginning at a point marked "1" on plan being South 25 degrees 53 minutes East, 5,876.64 m. from BLLM #1, Cad. 655, Albuera.

thence N 29 deg 30'W., 29.91 m. to point 2;
thence N 53 deg 50'E., 15.69 m. to point 3;
thence N 56 deg 06'E., 45.04 m. to point 4;
thence S 22 deg 32'E., 27.68 m. to point 5;
thence S 27 deg 10'E., 32.90 m. to point 6;
thence S 55 deg 11'W., 28.16 m. to point 7;
thence N 42 deg 23'W., 31.53 m. to point 8;
thence S 52 deg 22'W., 20.93 m. to point of

beginning, containing an area of **TWO THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED TWENTY ONE (2,271) SQUARE METER**, more or less. Bearings GRID. All corners are Old Points. Surveyed on July 7, 1975 by the Survey Party No. VIII-1(A) and was duly approved on February 28, 1990 by the Regional Executive Director, DENR, Region VIII, Tacloban City. This advance Plan was prepared on March 18, 1999 by the Chief, Technical Services Section and was certified correct on June 3, 1999 by the Regional Technical Director, DENR, Land Management Service, Region VIII, Tacloban City.

9. A parcel of land designated as Ap-08-000580 (Lot 4313, Cad. 655), situated in the Barangay of Damula-an, Municipality of Albuera, Province of Leyte, Island of Leyte. Bounded on the Northeast along Lines 1-2-3-4-5 by Lot 4201, on the Southeast along line 5-6 by Lot 4314, along line 6-7 by Lot 4312, on the Southwest along lines 7-8-9 by Lot 4308, along line 9-10 by Lot 4307, along line 10-11 by Lot 4306, on the Northwest along line 11-12 by Lot 4305, and along line 12-1 by Lot 4299, all of Cad. 655, Albuera Cadastre, Albuera, Leyte. Beginning at a point marked "1" on plan being South 26 degrees 38 minutes East 5,724.95 meters from BLLM #1, Cad. 655, Albuera.

thence S 36 deg 51'E., 32.87 m. to point 2;
thence S 08 deg 23'W., 13.51 m. to point 3;
thence S 06 deg 49'E., 31.86 m. to point 4;
thence S 28 deg 34'E., 06.90 m. to point 5;
thence S 22 deg 32'E., 32.83 m. to point 6;
thence S 50 deg 06'W., 45.04 m. to point 7;
thence N 47 deg 56'W., 32.75 m. to point 8;
thence N 45 deg 00'W., 04.38 m. to point 9;
thence N 47 deg 08'W., 08.00 m. to point 10;
thence N 49 deg 47'W., 53.01 m. to point 11;
thence N 35 deg 49'W., 27.45 m. to point 12;
thence N 62 deg 56'E., 100.81 m. to point of

beginning, containing an area of **EIGHT THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED THREE (8,903) SQUARE METERS**, more or less. Bearings GRID. All corners are Old Points. Surveyed on July 7, 1975 by the Survey Party No. VIII-1(A) and was duly approved on February 28, 1990 by the Regional Executive Director, DENR, Region VIII, Tacloban City. This advance Plan was prepared on March 17, 1999 by the Chief, Technical Services Section and was certified correct on June 3, 1999 by the Regional Technical Director, DENR-Land Management Service, Region VIII, Tacloban City.

A parcel of land designated as Lot 4340-B of the subdivision of Cad-08-0065[illegible]-D, being a portion of Lot 4340, Cad. 655, situated in the Barangay of Damula-an, Municipality of Albuera, Province of Leyte, Island of Leyte. Bounded on the NW., along line 1-2 by Lot 4310, Cad. 655, along line 2-3 by Lot 4312, Cad. 655, on the NE., along line 3-4 by Lot 4314, Cad. 655, along lines 4-5-6 by Lot 4321, Cad. 655, and on the SW., along line 7-1 by Lot 4043-A of this subdivision. Beginning at a point marked "1" on plan being S. 25 deg. 12'E., 5920.95 m. from BLLM #1, Cad. 655.

thence N. 54 deg 07'E., 103.13 m. to point 2;
thence N 55 deg 11'E., 28.16 m. to point 3;
thence S 27 deg 10'E., 17.28 m. to point 4;
thence S 51 deg 43'W., 1.21 m. to point 5;
thence S 40 deg 07'E., 12.79 m. to point 6;
thence S 52 deg 18'W., 123.36 m. to point 7;
thence N 44 deg 21'W., 34.69 m. to point of

beginning, containing an area of **FOUR THOUSAND NINETY TWO (4,092) SQUARE METERS**, more or less. All points referred to are indicated on plan and marked on the ground as follows: Points 1, 7 are P.S. cyl. conc. mons. 15x40 cm. and the rest are Old Points. Bearings Grid, date of original survey on September 23, 1985 and October 31, 1985 and the subdivision survey on April 14, 1999 by Geodetic Engineer Romulo M. Hilvano. Date of approval by the Regional Technical Director, DENR, LMS, Region 08, Tacloban City on September 3, 1999.

You are hereby served this notice to appear before this Court at its session to be held at **Municipal Trial Court, Albuera, Leyte, Philippines on the 12th day of April, 2002 at 8:30 o'clock in the forenoon**, then and there to present such claims as you may have to said lands or any portion thereof and to submit evidence in support of such claims and unless you appear at said Court at the time and place aforesaid, your default will be recorded and the title to the lands will be adjudicated and determined in accordance with law and the evidence before the Court and thereafter you will forever be barred from contesting said application (or petition) or any decree entered thereon.

Witness the HON. CELSO L. MANTUA, Judge of said Court, the 16th day of November, 2001.

Issued at Quezon City, Philippines, this 12th day of December, 2001.

ATTEST

SENECIO O. ORTILE
Administrator
Land Registration Authority

By:

(Sgd.) SALVADOR L. ORIEL
Chief, Docket Division

A True Copy:

(Sgd.) ADELAIDA I. CARAIG
Chief, Publication of Notices Section

(PDI – Feb 19, 2002)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

OBITUARIES

We condole
with the family

González Olivieri

on the untimely death of Sr. Don

José D. González Lie

A good man, whose example,
dedication and devotion has left his
family with a lasting legacy.

Beloved father of

Fernando González Olivieri
President, CEMEX Asia

Passed away on February 16, 2002
in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico

CEMEX
PHILIPPINES

"Eternal rest grant unto him O' Lord and let
Your perpetual light shine upon him...."

RUFINO C.F. "ROY" SANTOS III

Feb. 19, 1964 - Sept. 11, 2001

A Memorial Mass to commemorate the birthday of Roy and for the eternal repose of his soul will be celebrated in St. Andrew The Apostle Parish Church today (Feb. 19) at 6:30 pm.

Holy Masses are also offered at the following churches:

Shrine of Divine Mercy Mandaluyong City	6:00 a.m.
National Shrine of the Sacred Heart Dao, San Antonio Village, Makati City	7:30 a.m.
St. John Bosco Parish Church Arnaiz, Makati City	7:30 a.m.
San Pedro Parish Church San Pedro, Laguna	6:00 a.m.
Santuario de San Antonio Parish Church Forbes Park, Makati City	12:15 p.m.
St. Agnes Church 143 East 43rd St., New York, NY	7:00 a.m.
Church of Saint Vincent Ferrer 869 Lexington Ave., New York, NY	9:00 a.m.
Cathedral of St. Patrick New York, New York	12:10 p.m.
Holy Rosary Cathedral Vancouver, B.C. Canada	12:10 p.m.

His family requests relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

In remembrance of the late

Maura Nill Jacinto

on the occasion of her Second Death Anniversary
Masses will be offered on the 20th of February 2002
at the following churches:

St. Jerome Church, Ayala Alabang	6:00 PM
St. James Church, Ayala Alabang	6:30 PM
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Hillsborough, Alabang	6:00 PM
San Antonio Church, Forbes Park, Makati	12:15 PM
St. John Bosco, Arnaiz, Makati	6:00 PM

We will always remember you in our hearts.

JUAN MIGUEL "MIKE" P. GONZALES

of Urdaneta, Pangasinan and Paco, Manila
Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord
Sept. 4, 1945 - Feb. 16, 2002

His bereaved wife **Lizabeth E. Fernandez**, his sons **Michael John**, **Mark Joseph** and **Matthew James**; his brothers and sisters **Lenny** and **Bobby Tabberrah**, **Mandy** and **Cecile Natividad**, and **Gigie**; his in-laws **Bot** and **Babie Fernandez**, **Marie** and **Jim Ledesma**, **Nana** and **Willy Lorenzana**, **Karla Abarquez**; his nephews and nieces, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Dao St., San Antonio Village, Makati City.

Interment will be held on Saturday, February 23, 2002, at the Manila Memorial Park in Sucat, Parañaque, after the 9:00 am Mass.

Please omit flowers.

FELIX GO JO

(Sta. Cruz Marinduque)

Peacefully joined our Creator
on February 17, 2002 at the age of 66.

His wife **Shih Shiu Min**; children **Francisco** and wife **Susan**, **William**, daughter **Elizabeth** and husband **Wilson**; grandchildren **Ann Marie, Marc Alvin, Camille, Erika**, other relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal and peaceful repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel 8, Araneta St., Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Friday, February 22, 2002 at 9:00 a.m. place at Chinese Crematory La Loma Cemetery, Caloocan City.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

JOSE D. TANCUAN

Peacefully joined his Creator
on February 16, 2002 at the age of 86.

His bereaved wife **Irene**; children **Gary** (†) & **Cely Tancuan**, **Josie** & **Pocholo Veguillas**, **Danny** & **Eva Tancuan**, **David** & **Frances Tancuan**, **Alex** & **Chinnie Tancuan**, and **Carol** & **Hans Sy**; grandchildren and great grandchildren, other relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Capilla del Señor, Santuario de San Antonio Forbes Park.

Interment will be announced later.

We Remember Dearly

ARTHUR FRANCISCO GAITE TEVES

of Cagayan de Oro City and Iligan City

on his First Death Anniversary
February 19, 2002

Holy Mass will be offered today, February 19, 2002 at 3:00 PM in the Cagayan de Oro Gardens, Lumbia, Cagayan de Oro City.

*"Lord, let eternal light in Your Kingdom shine upon your servant, **ARTHUR FRANCISCO**, a beloved husband and loving father, son, brother and friend, Amen.*

We, his family, request relatives, friends and pious readers to join us in prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

On February 16, 2002

NENA BARROGA GABRIEL

went home to her Creator.

Her daughters **Irene**, **Maybelle** and **Lilibeth**; sons-in-law **Flor Castillo** and **Pocholo de la Cruz**; grandchildren **Angela, Lorenz** and **Nikki**; and the rest of her family request the reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz in Baguio City.

Interment will be on Thursday, February 21, 2002, Baguio City.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

MELITON M. CANSINO

October 5, 1936 - February 17, 2002

His wife **Atty. Salome Cansino**; children **Atty. Armel** and **Janet**, and **Atty. Albert**; grandchildren **Jed**, **Adam** and **Adrian**; brothers and sisters, request the pious readers to say a little prayer for the repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapel, Inc., Quezon City.

Interment will be at Himlayang Pilipino, Quezon City, on February 21, 2002, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Chapel.

Asiafood Expo continues to promote food industry

TRADE Information Marketing and Exhibitions Inc. invites companies involved in the food industry to participate in the AsiaFood Expo from Sept. 4 to 7 at the World Trade Center, Metro Manila.

AsiaFood Expo is one of the biggest food fairs in the Philippines exhibiting a wide range of supplies and equipment for food processing, packaging and food service industries. Held annually for 11 years now, it draws participation from 35 countries and more than 20,000 visitors. It features sophisticated state-of-the-art equipment and supplies for the food and beverage industry. It has been an excellent venue for expanding trade and industrial links between the Philippines and the rest of the world, and creates opportunities to initiate business relationships with local buyers.

AsiaFood Expo 2002 is the Eleventh International Exposition on Food Processing, Packagingand Handling Machinery, Equipment and Technology. It is held together with Food and Drinks Asia 2002, the Sixth International Exposition on Specialty Foods, Delicatessen, Confectionery, Beverages, Beers, Wines and Spirits; Food Franchising, the Sixth International Food Franchising and Business Exposition; and FoodServ 2002, International Exposition on Food Service, Catering Systems, Supplies Equipment and Technology.

Interested companies may call Trade Information Marketing and Exhibitions Inc at 834-0085/86, fax 831-3828, or e-mail time@skyinet.net for details.

During AsiaFood, Bakersfield, a division of Actron Industries, will hold its national finals of the first Bakersfield National Cake Decorating Competition. The contest will start in April up to August. It is open to all professional bakers, chefs, baking school instructors and baking entrepreneurs nationwide. The cakes of the national representatives will be displayed for the duration of the expo.

HKT INAUGURATES LAGUNA FACILITY

HKT Philippines Inc., engaged in the production of automotive parts and components, recently inaugurated its manufacturing facility at the Carmelray Industrial Park II Special Economic Zone in Calamba, Laguna. Shown (from left) is Laguna Representative Joaquin Chipeco, Jr. with Philippine Economic Zone Authority director general Lilia B. de Lima, HKT Philippines president Hisashi Endo, Zone manager Lorna Balite, HKT Phils. managing director Anthony D. Torres, and HKT Phils director Nelson Rafer.

SKTAI CAREGIVER PROGRAM

Sharp-Karilagan Training Academy Inc., an affiliate of CF Sharp Group of Companies, offers the Caregiver Program. Classes will start on March 2002. Enroll now and avail of the early bird promo. SKTAI has produced outstanding graduates who are now holding lucrative positions in different land and sea-based industries. For more info, visit its office at the fifth floor of the Shipping Center Building, 707 A. Soriano Avenue, Intramuros, Manila, or call527-1565/527-6418/527-1590.

Quick and healthy gourmet seafood dishes for the family

THE FILIPINO penchant for eating is legendary. Traditional fiestas occur all year round in various regions of the country, where the best of local cuisine are featured. But with increasing Western influences on Filipino dining, today's middle-income families with working housewives tend to resort more and more to canned goods, fast food, and quick-serve delights available in supermarkets. Even variants of age-old Filipino recipes have proliferated on supermarket shelves. Advertisements feature everything, from basic ingredients to complete condiments that make home cooking faster and easier for the Filipino housewife.

But more often than not, busy working mothers and young urban professionals are unaware of the calories and fat content that their rushed dishes include. The availability of fast food restaurants in almost every busy corner, and packed lunches delivered to office workers has commercialized the Filipino dining experience. Little concern is given to overall nutritional value and health implications of most quick-fix food.

Seachamp International, an export-oriented company, shows concern for the modern Filipino family's diet and nutrition. Mindful of fat and cholesterol content of most locally available food preparations, it recently introduced its flagship Polar Brand to the local market. Polar is a line of world-class, export-quality ready-to-cook gourmet seafood which Seachamp's team of certified food technologists have developed to meet the standards of its diverse international markets. For over a decade now, the discriminating palates of other Asians, particularly the Japanese, as well as many Europeans, have been enjoying various processed and frozen seafood delicacies exported by Seachamp.

Understanding the need to provide varied and nutritious food to the average Filipino family, Seachamp has decided to make its packaged seafood products available locally. Now you don't have to be a chef to whip up yummy seafood dishes served gourmet style. Just pop the contents of a box of any Polar Brand product into the microwave or into the frying pan lightly greased with vegetable oil (to prevent sticking) and enjoy the rich bounty of the Philippine seas.

From rellenong bangus, breaded calamari rings with tartar sauce, fish franks (all-fish hotdogs), breaded mini-crab cakes with honey tartar sauce, to squid rolls, breaded shrimp nuggets with sweet and sour sauce, or fish fingers with Dijon mustard sauce, all are available in as little as two minutes. Seachamp's all-natural fish burger patties have 83-percent less fat than regular hamburger.

"We're sure that these easy-to-serve gourmet seafood dishes will suit the changing tastes and lifestyles, at the same time will satisfy the diet and nutrition needs of the Filipino consumer. Likewise, health buffs and weight watchers who are concerned about high fat intake from meats and other fatty foods now have another option," explained Anna Marie Sy, VP/operations manager and the creative mind behind Polar Brand's food development team.

"Not only will Pinoys enjoy the convenience of preparation on top of good nutrition and taste, they will now have more products to choose from, especially in time for the coming Lenten season," Sy added.

The company undergoes regular product and facility inspections by the SGS (Societe Generale de Surveillance). Major fast food chains also regularly use Seachamp's institutional products. Among these are shrimp patties to the Wendy's hamburger chain, fish fillets to A&W and Miggy's Restuarants, seafood balls to Padi's Point and frozen soups to Au Bon Pain outlets.

BITS Clips

Partido Silver Jubilee reunion

MEMBERS of Class '77 of the Partido State University (formerly Partido National High School) will hold their Silver Jubilee reunion on March 31 this year at the school campus in Goa, Camarines Sur. The celebration will start with Mass at 8 a.m., and then features fun games for batch members and their families. The election of alumni officers will be held after lunch. Ballroom dancing caps the affair. Batchmates in Metro Manila may call Marlene Gonzaga-Brillantes at 712-1305, or Nora Salazar-Pacao at 837-5758. In Bicol, call Jose R. Narvaez at 0916-4710115 or Antonio A. Ante at (054)453-1478.

Marketing educators meet

THE ASSOCIATION of Marketing Educators (AME) mounts the 12th National Marketing Educators Conference on March 1 at the Ballroom of Hotel Rembrandt and the 4th Students' Marketing Conference on March 2 at the Jade Valley Restaurant in Quezon City. This year's theme "E-Marketing: Sustaining Industry-Academe Partnership" focuses on how to strengthen the quality marketing education in the country with the hope of producing world-class marketing executives among students. Some of the resource speakers are Clarence Henderson, president of Henderson Consulting; Joselito Ortega, president of BBDO/Guerrero Ortega; Gem Yabut of Emaya Inc.; Judith Cabinian of J. Walter Thompson; and Cora Doloroso, president of the Cora Doloroso Career Center. For inquiries, call Annabelle Payawal of the AME secretariat at 893-6459, 893-7127 and 892-3144.

CAP Davao ready for Pasyalan

THE 2,000-seater CAP Development Center (CDC) in Davao City is now ready for College Assurance Plan's 22nd Pasyalan Bayan 2002. Davao City, being the site of CAP's first building in 1984, is now also the site of its biggest CDC. Four years after the former CDC opened, a new and bigger structure with upgraded facilities is now ready for the Pasyalan Bayan from Feb. 20 to 23. The three-story building covers a floor area of 1,380 sqm., with basement and ground parking to accommodate 60 cars. The auditorium is designed for theatrical staging and effects as required by Pasyalan's main events. It will be the first time in CAP's history that Pasyalan events would be held in a CDC.

Sessions on total management system

THE EMPLOYERS Confederation of the Philippines (Ecop) is holding a series of learning sessions on the different Nikkeiren-sponsored training programs attended by managers of Ecop members in Japan. The learning sessions kick off Feb. 19, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Ecop Training Center, zeroing in on total management System. The learning session will enable participants to learn from Japanese companies best practices on total management system concepts and tools. Topics include hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP), just-in-time manufacturing and inventory, Kaizen and 5S, environmental management and supply chain management. For more information, call Faye Casem at the Ecop secretariat at 890-4847/890-4845/899-0411.

PayLite's below 0% offer

CITIBANK Credit Cards brings you another innovation. While other cards are still offering 0-percent interest on their installment programs, Citibank PayLite has gone the extra mile to give its cardholders the best deal in town—with PayLite's Below 0% offer. This promo offers great installment deals that would help cardholders save on interest payments, and give cash credits as well. The PayLite Below 0% offer is now available at SM City Bacoor up to Feb. 24. Under the program, cardholders will get back 1 percent of their PayLite purchased amount, reflected on their card statements for the next six months. With the total 6-percent cash credit, Citibank cardholders pay lower than the cash price. Of course, 0-percent and reduced interest rate offers are still available with Citibank PayLite on the promo dates. For more information, call the 24-hour CitiPhone at 995-9999.

Lasallian artists' works on exhibit

IN TIME for the celebration of the art month, De La Salle University-Dasmariñas has an ongoing exhibit "Beginnings". The exhibit features landscapes, seascapes, portraits and sketches by budding Lasallian artists Angelo Aguinaldo, Frederick Agustin and Orlando Oliveros, who are all members of the academic community of DLSU-D. The exhibit is at the Aklatang Emilio Aguinaldo main gallery and runs until Feb. 28.

Boracay Bodies search nears

BORACAY Bodies Model Search 2002, a modeling and personality competition, is set to hold its finals night in Boracay on March 8 and 9 at The Sun Village Beachfront Resort. Presented by Omega and Philips, the competition is open to males and females 15 to 32 years old with striking good looks, charming personalities, and of good moral character. Eliminations will be held on Feb. 20 at 7 p.m. at Café 5060, Filmore Street, Makati City, where 20 finalists will be selected. The finalists will tour some of Manila's hottest nightspots. More than P500,000 in cash and prizes will be given to the top three winning contestants, including Omega and cK Watches, travel gear, all-expense-paid trips to other tourist destinations, outfits from Mike dela Rosa and Efren Ocampo. For more information, call 813-1338, 893-9355 and 816-3109.

UP PREP HS '62 COMMITTEE MEETING

The University of the Philippines Preparatory High School batch 1962 committee recently met at Albas Restaurante Español in Polaris to discuss the final plans for the school's recently concluded Ruby Jubilee alumni homecoming. Shown, from left, are Tessie Sempio-Palomo, treasurer, Edna Ledesma, PRO, Delfin Lazaro, class president, Letty Velasco-Guiao, secretary, Dr. Myrna Rosel, member, and Willie Caballa, head of the sports committee.

PUGAD LAWIN NATIONAL INDUCTION

Department of National Defense Secretary Angelo Tomas Reyes is given the arrival honors by NVP Lawin Reuben Magsino and NCR governor Joel Aton recently at the Kalayaan Hall of Club Filipino. Pugad Lawin Philippines, the first nationwide Filipino socio-civic organization, held its annual national induction with the theme "Siglawin, Pagbubuklod at Paglilingkod". Pugad Lawin conferred an honorary membership to Reyes, who was the guest of honor and inducting officer. Former NHI director Arsenio Organo was also conferred an honorary membership, while French expat Jean Marie Bertin was one of the new members inducted. NDCC executive director Melchor Rosales and Asec Buddy Melchor also graced the occasion.

FINISHING WORKS AT NAIA 3

Officials and project managers behind the construction and operation of the NAIA Terminal 3 explain to the media the start of finishing works and the first walkalator in the country. Once the new terminal is completed in November, tourist arrivals and investments are expected to rise. The NAIA Terminal 3 is a world-class fully equipped air facility capable of handling 13 million arrivals a year. Shown from left is Melih Dipova, project-manager for facilities and maintenance (PTI), with lawyer Moises Tolentino, vice president for public affairs (Piatco), Karl May, project manager for construction (PTI), Samin Aydin, director of terminal operations (PTI), and architect Jun Benito.

REALESTATE

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Safety of steel, next-gen elevators spice up Worldbex seminar

By Tessa R. Salazar

IS steel structure still suitable for skyscrapers, after what happened to the World Trade Center? Will we see Generation 2 or G2 elevators in our buildings soon? Would an ecological building be the prevailing design of the future? Is there any one single formula to solve project financing and eventually pump prime the construction business in the country? What kind of insulation material should be used in tropical countries like the Philippines?

The answers are upcoming. Six foreign experts and one Filipino financing guru are scheduled to share their views on such issues in a two-day seminar. Slated on March 14 and 15, the seminar will coincide with the Philippines' World Building and Construction Exposition at the World Trade Center in Metro Manila on March 13-17.

Speakers

Vincent Laza will talk about "Project Financing Solutions: The LGU Bond." Three of Singapore's construction professionals will share their views on architecture, design and engineering. They are Graham Daines on "Are Buildings in Steel Still Safe?"; Chee Kok Weng on "Design and Construction of Affordable Housing in Singapore"; and Andrew Moore on "How an International Practice Offers Global Perspective on Hospitality Design."

Malaysia's Dr. Ken Yeang will also talk about "Ecological Design of Large Buildings and Sites" and New Zealand's Keith May will speak on "Reflective Foils and its Benefits for Insulation in Tropical Countries."

Covering a gross space of 20,000 square meters will be over 500 local and international exhibitors. About 40,000 trade professionals and industry experts are expected to attend. Construction technology enthusiasts are expecting a showdown of construction and building technology, products and services.

The United States delegation is slated to take 36 booths in the Worldbex. One exhibitor is a US-based Filipino architect who will exhibit works he did in the United States.

Still the biggest

Worldbex is touted as the biggest construction event in Asia. Worldbex executive director-architect Francisco G. Flameño Jr., who also chairs the Worldbex seminars, said that compared with recent shows in Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand, the Philippines' Worldbex is still the biggest so far.

According to Flameño, Worldbex helps pump prime the Philippine construction industry.

"Most foreign exhibitors scout for local distributors and dealers to carry their products. These are companies that are coming in for the first time in the Philippines."

He cited that two years ago, a Canadian exhibitor who was able to get a local partner got into a big project. It got so successful, he said, that the joint venture became a manufacturer-distributor relationship with the local partner transforming into a developer.

Organizing the Worldbex is conservatively estimated to cost no less than P15 million.

Subsidized

"Instead of Filipino construction professionals going abroad and spending for plane fares, hotel accommodations and seminars, we hope they would take advantage of Worldbex which we partly subsidize," said Flameño.

That, and the Filipino public would as well know if steel is still it, how G2 elevators—elevators that use their own motors—work, how ecologically designed buildings let natural light come in for the plants inside, and, maybe, how to wake the local construction industry up.

Registration details are available at www.worldbex.com. Inquiries would also be entertained at e-mail seminars@worldbex.ph or at Worldbex Services International at 531-6350, 531-6374, fax 533-2026. The Worldbex office is at 488 Boni Ave. cor San Joaquin St., Mandaluyong City, Philippines.

More countries sign up for world building expo

THE LIST of participating countries to the 7th Philippines World Building and Construction Exposition (Worldbex 2002) gets longer with exhibitors totaling 20 countries signing up.

Making up the initial list of international participants to Asia's largest and most comprehensive exposition on building and construction products and services are China, Italy, Iran, Taiwan, Thailand, France, Denmark, Italy, New Zealand, Romania, Netherlands, Finland, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Philippines.

Set to put up country pavilions are exhibitors from the United States, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia and Korea.

Major highlight

One of the major highlights of Worldbex 2002 is the Grand Embassy Pavilion where government and trade offices of various countries will serve as information and resource centers.

"The participation of exhibitors from these countries has further bolstered the international prestige of Worldbex," said Joseph Ang, founding chair of Worldbex Services International, the event organizer.

Confirmation

Worldbex, said Ang, has already received confirmation on the participation of some 400 exhibitors and 23 industry associations. "We have earlier gotten strong support from the US Commercial Service and the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines," Ang added.

Other highlights of Worldbex 2002, slated from March 13 to 18 at the World Trade Center in Pasay City, include the Wordlbex seminars, the CyberVillage, housing and realty pavilion, business matching center and onstage product demonstrations.

BOT law boosts investor confidence

IN ITS MEDIUM-TERM Development Plan for 1999-2004, the Philippines needs around P1.2 trillion for its infrastructure development program. Private sector cooperation is the key strategy under the Philippine Economic Development Plan. For it to succeed, the government has to create an appropriate investment climate that will boost private sector participation in various infrastructure projects.

"We should be proud of our Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Law. Other governments are copying it because it is effective in attracting investors," said Noel Kintanar, executive director of the Coordinating Council for Private Sector Participation, an agency under the Office of the President. "The success of any project under the BOT scheme, which the country pioneered, would definitely translate to more investments from foreign as well as local investors," he added.

Private investment

In the Philippines, the BOT Law (Republic Act 7718) has made possible private investment in public infrastructure projects valued around US$15 billion. One such BOT project is the Naia International Passenger Terminal 3 (Naia IPT 3), in which the project proponents have already poured in close to P26 billion into its construction. Naia IPT 3 is the first major airport facility in the Asia-Pacific region done under the innovative BOT Law.

Reports from the Department of Trade and Industry revealed that the Naia IPT 3 project, currently the biggest construction venture in the whole of Southeast Asia, posted a 1.6 percent growth in the construction demand for 2001. The National Statistic Office pointed out that a project the size of Naia IPT 3 benefits 67 other allied industries.

At present, the employment opportunities generated from the project are 4,000 direct and 20,000 indirect, and an estimated 12,500 persons will be provided jobs when the terminal is fully operational. Additional employment opportunities will be open with the expanded terminal operations. Also commercial activities will increase with more than 34,000-sq.-m commercial space available within the terminal as well as the complementary development of the site itself such as hotels and conference facilities.

4 Asia-Pacific Awards

Against an arduous market environment, the Naia IPT 3 project managed to achieve a number of financing benchmarks as well as garnering four Asia-Pacific Awards:

- Asian Infrastructure Deal of the Year from Project Finance International
- Project Finance Deal of the Year, Finance Asia
- Project Finance Deal of the Year, AsiaMoney
- Philippine Loan Deal of the Year, International Finance Research Asia

The eyes of the international finance community as well as foreign investors are trained on the completion of the Naia IPT 3 Project. The opening of the new terminal in December will symbolize the success of the BOT scheme to encourage the private sector to participate in the national government's infrastructure development program. Other BOT projects include the Metro Railway Transit (MRT) and Metropolitan Manila Waterworks and Sewerage Systems (MWSS).

NEW OFFICE BUILDING ON THE RISE
Construction of Eastwood Corporate Plaza, an 11-story information technology center now rising at Eastwood City CyberPark in Libis, Quezon City, has reached the sixth level. The office building will be ready for occupancy by the last quarter of 2003. A project of premier urban property developer Megaworld Corp., Eastwood Corporate Plaza will add more than 8,500 square meters of office space to the CyberPark.

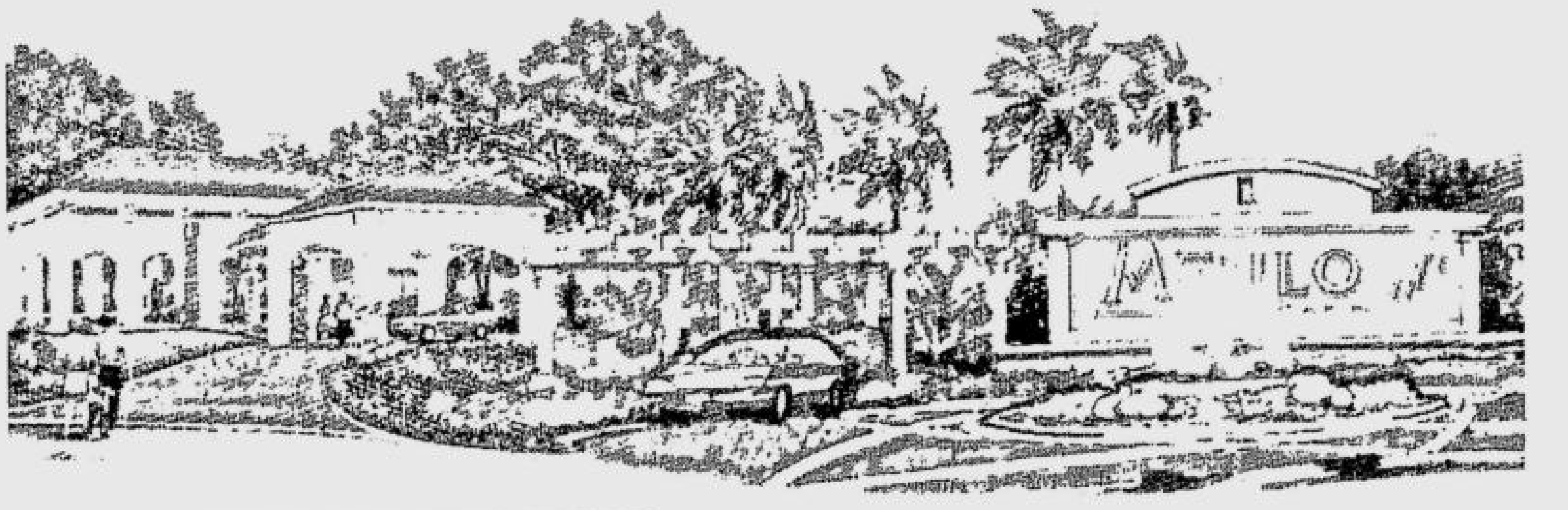
Garden homes soon to rise

MIRA Verde Garden Homes is located in Barangay San Luis, Antipolo City, within the Antipolo Hills Subdivision, a mere one kilometer away from the La Salle School.

The project site is only 30 minutes away from the major business and commercial centers of Pasig and Quezon City; and 15 kilometers away from the Ortigas central business district, yet far from the reach of metropolitan pollution.

Development features include the landscape entrance gate with guardhouse, pocket gardens and tree-lined footpaths, 15-meter-wide concrete main road and 8-meter-wide inner road networks, concrete curbs and gutters, underground drainage system, centralized water distribution system and Meralco electrical power supply.

Mira Verde Garden Homes offers townhouse and single-attached units at affordable prices. With buyers' financing easily available from Pag-Ibig Fund, commercial banks and developer's in-house facility, one can select from a range of loan features to suit one's budget. For as low as P3,500 per month, one can own a home amid the natural beauty of Antipolo.



STANDARD-SETTING RESIDENTIAL PROJECT
BF CITI Land Corp., one of the country's pioneer real estate developers, recently unveiled Menlo Park, its most prestigious project to date. Located inside BF-Homes Parañaque, the 3.6-hectare development features a resort-like environment highlighted by elegant and roomy homes, tree-lined roads, spacious common areas such as impressive cul-de-sacs and the landscaped Menlo Circle, plus the superbly designed clubhouse. Construction of the clubhouse and the model homes are almost complete while the road and sewerage systems have already been laid in place.

First-class homes now affordable

IMAGINE the stress of city living and entering a lush, tranquil neighborhood to nurture your soul. It doesn't take too much to envision the perfect place to call home. A family in search for a first-class home need not look too far as this vision will soon be a reality with a master-planned community soon to rise in Las Piñas.

As you enter, you are greeted by lush landscaping dotted with houses in tropical designs and contemporary flair, perfect for our hot and humid weather. Spacious but decidedly cozy, this subdivision offers security and exclusivity comparable to high-end subdivisions. BF-Pilar Southville is the perfect answer to families looking for a home they can proudly call their own.

Amenities, accessibility

With the overall design by renowned architect Rod Bernardo, BF-Pilar Southville offers upscale amenities including a clubhouse where neighbors can gather on a lazy Sunday afternoon to chat and relax. The clubhouse comes complete with swimming pool, sports and banquet facilities.

The accessibility of BF-Pilar Southville also attracts the practical homebuyer since it is near commercial centers, schools and hospitals. It has easy entry to the expressway so that the usual city conveniences can still be enjoyed while living in peaceful surroundings. Truly, it is a haven for middle-class families who feel and know they deserve a first class home.

This real estate innovation will give homeowners an exceptional lifestyle. BF-Pilar Southville is a charming neighborhood ideal for professionals and growing families, as well as retirees who seek a more peaceful environment. This subdivision also serves as prime property for families seeking to relocate or upgrade to a better home. Families of overseas contract workers would find it suitable for investing.

Accomplished developer

Known in the real estate industry as the most accomplished developers of suburban residential subdivisions and acknowledged pioneer in affordable housing, Pilar Development Corp. is the force behind this exciting new sanctuary down south.

With the development of the 13-hectare BF-Pilar Southville, PDC continues its legacy of offering a superior quality of life for Filipino families. Another PDC project, the charming Mediterranean-inspired Sunpointe Series Homes 1, 2, 3 and 5 in BF Resort, Las Piñas, is proof that the PDC commits to providing Filipinos with homes that feature smart designs, comfortable interiors, security and exclusivity.

The PDC is currently taking reservations for BF-Pilar Southville Homes. Arrange for your own personal tour simply by calling 565-3162 and 806-3420 or visit the website at www.pilardevelopment.com.

Termites more dangerous than buglars

THEY will break into your home very, very quietly and you'll see no evidence of their work until something gives way. They are so efficient that they will find their way through cracks in the structure. They work 24 hours a day, voraciously gnawing through wooden beams, prized possessions and important documents. They will cost you hundreds of thousands of pesos in structural repairs. They can destroy and consume your greatest investment—your home.

The fact is, termites are more dangerous than burglars and much more likely to occur than fire. Experts say one out of two houses will be a target of termites. Our country is home to Philippine Milk termites or "white ants," the most tolerant to chemical treatment, very voracious and can thrive even in high-rises. Those little critters are such excellent foragers that they have rendered many attempts at termite-proofing quite unsuccessful.

Revolutionary technology

Now, home and property owners can have peace of mind. Sentricon System, a revolutionary technology developed by US-based leader Dow Agro Sciences, stops the destruction and prevents it from ever occurring. The system acts like an early warning device and a treatment method, and works by taking advantage of natural termite behavior.

Here's how Sentricon System wipes out entire termite colonies: First, Sentricon feeding stations will be placed in the soil around your home. When termites find the feeding station, they will leave special scent trails to summon their nestmates to the Sentricon post. Each station contains hexaflumuron, a substance that stops the molting process so termites can't grow. In time, all members of the termite colony will die. After the problem has been eliminated, Sentricon technicians will continue to inspect your property to prevent future termite attacks.

Keeping environs safe

Hexaflumuron, the bait material in Sentricon, is the first pest control product in the United States to receive "fast track" registration from the Environmental Protection Agency in the new "Reduced Pesticide Risk" category. Sentricon was also awarded by the Clinton administration the US Presidential Green Chemistry Award for its commitment to keep the environment safe.

Sentricon is odorless, absolutely nondisruptive, environment-friendly and safe which makes it excellent for homes and high-rise buildings, and "sensitive" areas like hospitals, food establishments, schools, libraries, warehouses and museums. Sentricon is, in fact, the same system that protects the US Statue of Liberty, some Philippine historical sites like the Rizal Shrines in Calamba and Fort Santiago, and millions of homes and properties in the Philippines and around the world. You can allow termites to rob you of your peace of mind or you can invest in the Sentricon solution to save your bigger investment. The choice is yours. Meantime, those termites will continue merrily making a meal out of your own home.

Find out for yourself why industry leaders consider Sentricon System as the best possible termite protection for your home. Call (32) 867-9797 now, or visit us www.sentricon.com.

Private sector urged on district housing

THE PRIVATE Consultative Council for Shelter has called on its member-organizations to participate in developing socialized housing projects to be undertaken in all congressional districts of the country under the government's Local (District) Housing Program.

Romeo Thaddeus Liamzon Jr., PCCS chair, made the call following the recent issuance by the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council of the amended implementing guidelines for the Local Housing Program.

A unified consultative and advocacy body for affordable housing, the PCCS is composed of the National Real Estate Association, Women in Shelter and Its Environment, Organization of Socialized Housing Developers of the Philippines, Builders Alliance Toward Action, Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Association (Creba), and the Subdivision and Housing Developers Association.

Liamzon cited that district housing may be undertaken by the National Housing Authority, on its own, or through joint undertaking/joint venture arrangements with local government units (LGUs), other government agencies and private sector proponents including landowners, developers, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), cooperatives, community associations or people's organizations.

A LAGOON-TYPE swimming pool, children's playground and basketball court beside the clubhouse are among the recreational facilities.

ONE of the several buildings in Lakeview Manors

LAKEVIEW MANORS

Affordable quality living in Metro Manila

By Charles E. Buban

IS it still possible to find an affordable yet quality community within Metro Manila? Perhaps this is one question homebuyers keep on asking before they decide to buy a property either in the far north or south of Metro Manila.

This should not be the case now as property developer DMCI Holdings gives homebuyers a good choice—the Lakeview Manors.

Located in Taguig, Metro Manila, this 2.65-hectare property is a mere five minutes away from C-5 and The Fort, and only 15-minutes from key financial districts of Makati and Ortigas.

" Lakeview Manors has amenities and facilities normally found only in expensive luxury condominiums, proving that you don't need to be rich or look somewhere else to be able to live elegantly and comfortably," assures Alfredo Austria, vice president for business development of DMCI Holdings.

Started in late 1999, the Lakeview Manors is a picture of progress. Constructed in three phases, the first one is now completely sold out. Phases two and three are 70 percent and 60 percent finished, respectively, as three buildings are now fully occupied. "Market response is better than expected," reports Tet Abad Santos, general manager of DMCI subsidiary, PDI Marketing.

Blend of function and style

For one thing, the buildings and other structures of Lakeview Manors are tastefully constructed to blend function and style. They are colorful: painted in different bright terracotta shades that truly enliven the landscape.

The building designs ingeniously incorporate natural lighting and ventilation. In addition, units face open space on the front and back to allow a panoramic view of the surrounding areas including the Makati skyline.

"Lakeview Manors is indeed not like the rest of condos out there," says Austria.

Amenities and facilities include a lagoon-type swimming pool, a clubhouse, children's playgrounds, basketball court, administrative offices and more than adequate parking spaces. These luxurious features are in line with the developer's plan to make Lakeview Manors a self-contained, dynamic and close-knit community of about 400 families.

And there's more to come, says Abad Santos. On the drawing board are mini mall or arcade including a convenience store, a parlor and a gym, as well as commercial buildings and a DECS-certified preschool learning center.

Descent housing

The Lakeview Manors boasts of seven condominium and townhouse buildings. The 48-unit condos each have skylights and atriums (or mini gardens) in the middle of wide corridors to let through sunshine and air.

The condo buildings themselves occupy three floors, with the third floor covering bigger floor areas comprised of two-story units. Standard sizes range from 42 sq. m to 108 sq. m. These have two or three bedrooms, one or two bathrooms, and living, dining and kitchen areas. Bigger units have a maid's room, a service area, a walk-in cabinet or other added features. A communal drying area for storage and clothes-drying purposes occupies the roof deck.

The townhouse buildings, on the other hand, are two-floor structures composed of two units on the ground floor and a couple of two-story units on the top floor. Floor areas are bigger here, from 60 sq. m to 150 sq. m.

"Decent housing is a basic need, and we're setting out to prove that with our cost-efficiency mindset and building expertise, it is possible to provide the Filipino family a whole new lifestyle in a community accessible to the good life," says Austria.

Unit prices range from P950,000 to a little over P3 million. In-house and bank financing schemes for homebuyers who belong to middle-income families are provided.

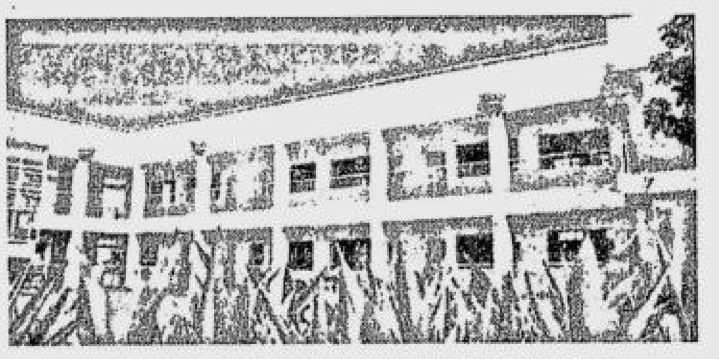
Created to suit your taste

What's interesting about Lakeview Manors is the wide choice of designs and finishes it offers to meet all sorts of homebuyer's budgetary requirements. Homebuyers can either choose bare or dressed units which provide various add-ons, including a variety of floorings—marble tiles or wood parquet—and more ornate kitchen and bathroom accessories.

Homebuyers can also choose from a broad array of floor layouts to suit various tastes and accommodate different family sizes that include a two-door bathroom opening to oppositely placed bedrooms.

According to Austria these choices are made possible through DMCI's unique edge being both developer and contractor. "Thanks to our nearly 50 years of high-end construction experience and our recent entry to real estate development, we are able to effectively realize cost-efficiency, something other developers cannot provide."

For scheduling of trips, the DMCI can be reached at 888-3333.



NEW LAGUNA BELAIR SCHOOL BUILDING

Housing developer Empire East Land Holdings Inc. has completed the new building of Laguna BelAir School, the learning institution of the popular Laguna BelAir township in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. The two-story modern school building houses a library, a science laboratory and additional classrooms to accommodate a growing student population.

Building better homes, friendly communities

BETTER Homes and friendly communities. BF CITI Land Corp. is known for this legacy. For 25 years now, BF CITI Land Corp. has proven that it is a developer with a heart and a vision.

The company has provided convenient homes to over 2,000 families. Over the years, it has given homeowners good value for their investments. Indeed, BF CITI occupies an esteemed place in the housing industry due to its remarkable track record.

Niche in tract housing

Starting out in 1977 as BF Commercial and Industrial Trade Inc., the company's name was changed to BF CITI Land Corp. in 1979, wherein construction and housing development was actively pursued. Through the years, BF CITI has carved a niche in tract housing within the BF Parañaque and Las Piñas area addressing the middle-income to upper-middle-income market. Among its notable projects are Southgate Homes' Southland Classics and Mediterranean Ensemble.

BF CITI is known for its innovative design and quality in construction. Its name has become synonymous with superior homes in convenient locations, at affordable prices, offering flexible financial packages.

Commitment

As the company celebrates its silver anniversary, the management and staff of BF CITI reaffirm their commitment to pursue the company's vision and its corporate values of tradition, teamwork, service and quality which will continue to be the hallmark in all its future undertakings.

And what better way to celebrate another milestone in its colorful history than to unveil Menlo Park, its latest project. At Menlo Park, prospective owners are given the option to choose the interior they want. This allows each owner to use his imagination and put his personal stamp on the house. Thus, enabling him and his family to live their ideal lifestyle and perfect it.

Loan documents further reduced

AVAILMENTS of loans by community associations of informal settlers to buy the land they occupy and for house improvement under the government's Community Mortgage Program (CMP) is expected to get an added boost with the second wave of reduction in the loan documents required under the program.

Further cut

Further reduced from 23 to 18, the CMP loan documents originally comprised of 56 documents until these were reduced in October 2001 by 59 percent, to 23.

This was in line with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's order to cut by at least 50 percent the requirements for loan availment under the government shelter program, according to lawyer Angelico T. Salud, president of National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. that administers the CMP.

The CMP is the home financing component of the government housing program catering to the housing loan needs of informal settlers, who have organized themselves into duly registered community associations to avail of group housing loans for the purchase of an undivided tract of land held under the concept of community ownership.

The recent wave of reduction in CMP loan documents was contained in NHMFC corporate circular recently issued by the NHMFC.

Training workshops

Salud also announced that the NHMFC would join the National Congress of CMP Originators and Social Development Organizations for Low- Income Housing, in conducting a series of training workshops on the liberalized loan guidelines for the informal settlers.

To be undertaken by the Kahugpungan ng Mindanao Inc., one workshop will be for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from the various cities of Mindanao who are either already accredited or wish to participate as loan conduits under the CMP, particularly those coming from Davao City, Cagayan de Oro, Butuan, General Santos and Zamboanga City.

The housing NGOs have become reliable partners in assisting informal settlers in on-lending P209.3-million loans, comprising 63 percent of total loans granted last year under the program, Salud.

Taft Tower structural completion ceremonies held

THE LA SALLE University System and E. Ganzon Inc., owner, developer and contractor of the Taft Tower located at 2339 Taft Ave., Malate, Manila, recently capped the structural completion of the 29-story building, according to Bienvenido G. de Castro, vice president of E. Ganzon Inc.

Reception was held at the La Casita, second floor, PE and Sports Building, DLSU-Manila.

Bro. Rolando Dizon, La Salle University president, and engineer Eulalio Ganzon, EGI president, highlighted during the program the significance of the project as a gift of love.

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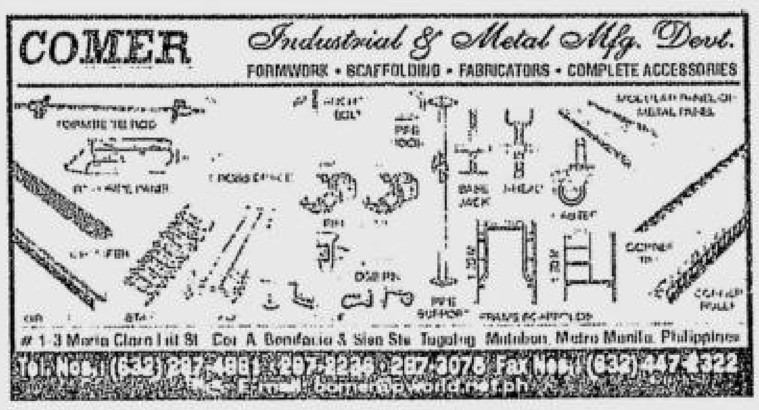

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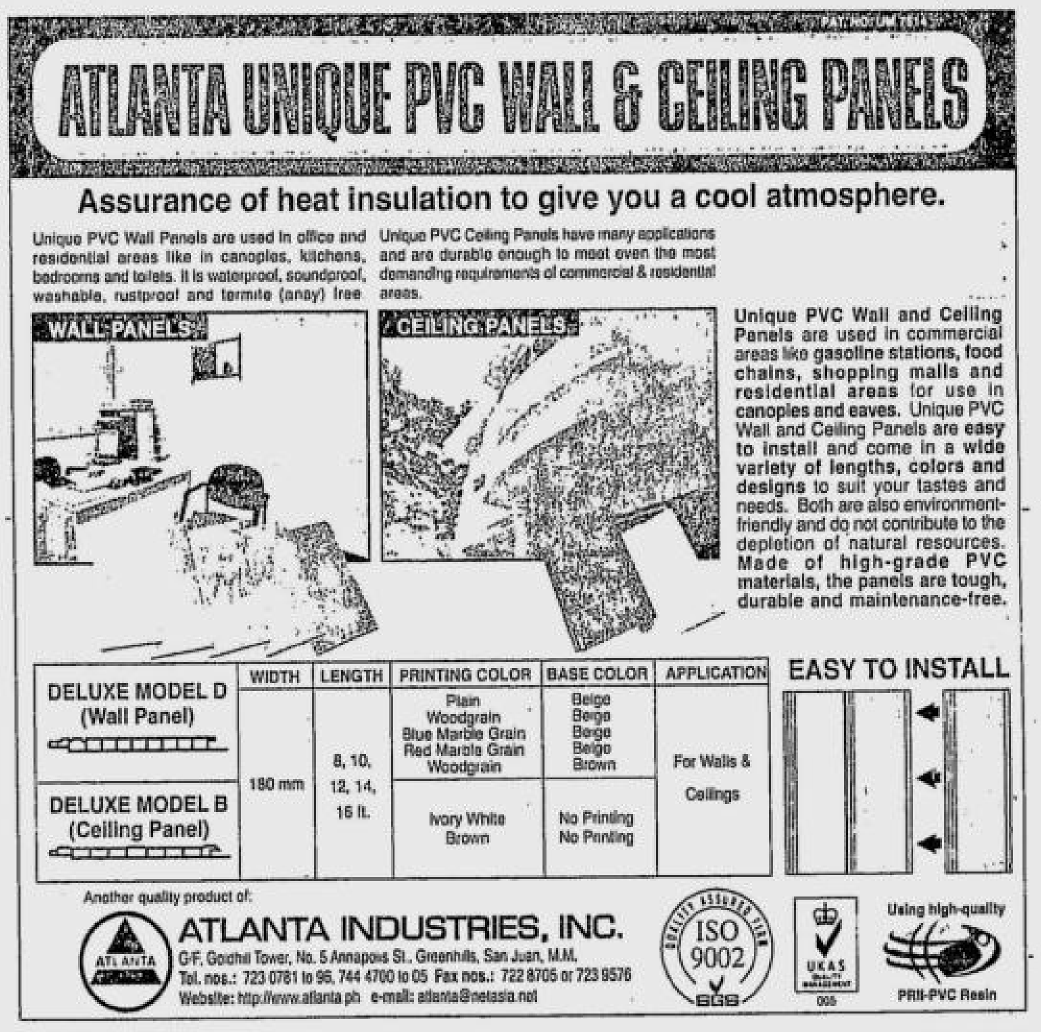

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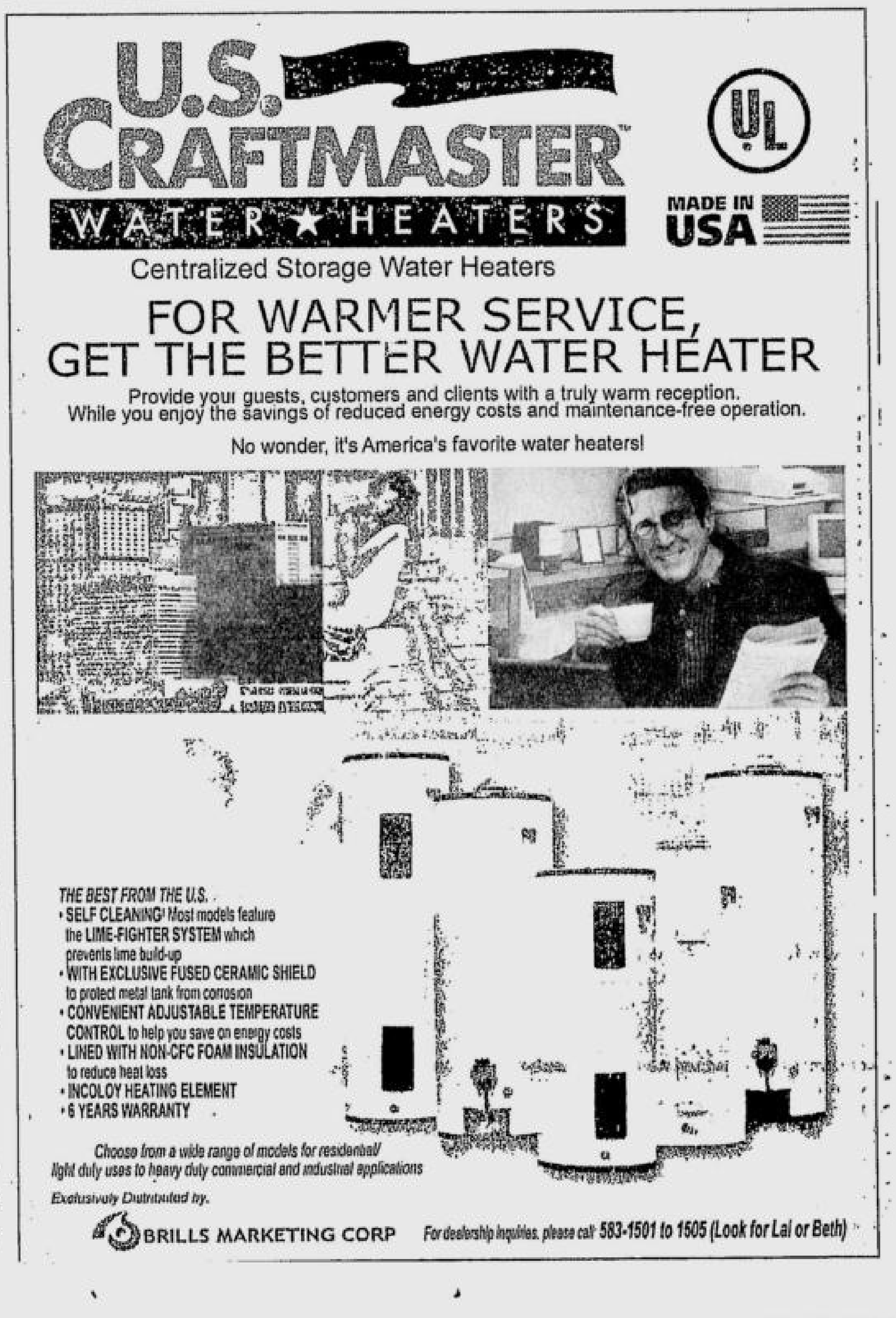

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RP to seek lifting of US, Japan travel advisory

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINE air panel will seek the lifting of the travel advisories issued by China, Japan and the United States warning their citizens against traveling to certain parts of the Philippines when the Philippines holds air talks with these countries in the first half this year.

Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez yesterday said in a statement that it would be "inconsistent" for these countries' flag carriers to continue servicing the Philippine route if these travel advisories would remain in effect.

Alvarez said the Philippine panel would like these countries to ensure that the travel ban would be lifted before the country would enter into new air agreements with them.

In the wake of mounting kidnapping activities by extremist groups last year, Japan and the US both issued travel advisories to their citizens.

Japan, which used to bring into the country the most number of tourists, issued a level 2 travel advisory to its citizens, banning travel to certain parts of the Philippines, especially those considered as kidnapping hotspots.

Alvarez expressed optimism that security threats, like the Abu Sayyaf kidnapping cases, cited as the main reason for the travel bans would be resolved before the end of the first half of the year.

"I am not tying up the lifting of the travel bans to their continued use of Philippine routes, but I think this can help," he said.

He admitted, however, that some of the countries with which the Philippines would be having air talks could resort to severing their ties with the country because of the perceived security threats.

"We will prepare for that eventuality," he said.

Aside from China, Japan and the US, the Philippines is also scheduled to hold air talks with eight other countries this year. These are Brunei, Thailand and Vietnam for the second quarter; Bahrain, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia for the third quarter; and Qatar and Oman for the fourth quarter.

In an earlier interview, Air Transportation Office chief Adelberto Yap said the Philippine air panel would also seek "safeguards" to make sure that the country would not be left out in the cold should certain events push other countries to issue travel advisories to their citizens.

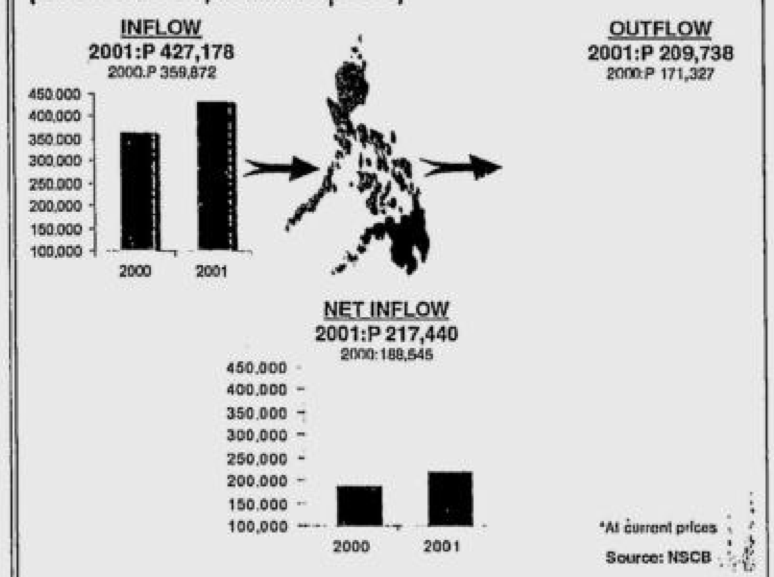
The Philippine delegation will also insist on reciprocal air rights during the negotiations, Alvarez said.

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Net factor income from abroad*

(2000 & 2001, in million pesos)



*At current prices

Source: NSCB

GROWTH of net income from abroad contributed 0.5 percentage point to gross national product growth. An increase of 29.8 percent in the inflows from overseas Filipino workers to P427.2 million was able to offset the fall in property income, which was compounded by an increase in property expenses. Net factor income from abroad rose to P217.4 billion.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

McDo, Jollibee urged to tap local suppliers

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry wants local and foreign fast-food and restaurant chains to eschew imports and tap local suppliers for their purchases of fruits, vegetable, fish, meat, processed food products and packaging requirements.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II said the backward integration of the food retailers' supply chain to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) would have a big impact on the economy.

"Just imagine how much money would circulate in the system if Jollibee (with its P17 billion in sales) and McDonald's (with P12 billion in sales) would buy a majority of their inputs from local suppliers," Roxas said.

Roxas said that most fast-food chains and restaurants prefer to buy tomatoes or beef patties from overseas rather than from local farmers because they found it expeditious to deal with a single foreign trader rather than with dozens of SMEs scattered all over the country. They also find imports cheaper and of higher quality than those locally available.

"We believe that building an efficient logistics supply chain will prompt companies like Jollibee and McDonald's to go local," Roxas said. The DTI is planning to act as a matchmaker between suppliers and buyers while providing SMEs with transportation, and refrigeration and warehousing facilities.

Roxas said giving SMEs access to low-cost financing could solve the local suppliers' problem of pricing and quality. Based on initial discussions, Roxas said the DTI would ask SMEs to first get purchase orders from the fast-food chains and restaurants before providing them with financing through the help of the Small Business Guarantee Fund Corp. and Government Financing for SME.

The DTI is currently reviewing the shopping list of fast-food chains and restaurants to determine which of their imported items could be sufficiently replaced by local suppliers. The DTI is in discussions with members of the Philippine Retail Association, Philippine Franchise Association and Association of Filipino Franchisers.

Local franchisers led by Samie Lim have been lobbying the government for financing support much like development strategy taken up by the Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand governments to build up their local franchises for foreign expansion.

PAL-CebuPac row heats up

WITH its fleet of mostly decades-old DC-9 aircraft, Cebu Pacific Airways can naturally afford to dive its fares way below market level without adding any real value to its product.

Philippine Airlines yesterday said this in a statement in reaction to Cebu Pacific's claims that PAL could not hope to match its low rates because of the pioneer flag carrier's higher cost structure.

Newspaper reports said that Cebu Pacific was able to charge a one-way fare of US$59 for a special flight to Hong Kong on Feb. 16 using DC-9 aircraft.

PAL said that with the old planes Cebu Pacific was using, coupled with its spartan service, it logically incurred lower overhead and maintenance costs. This allows Cebu Pacific to drastically drop fares to capture market share on the highly competitive Manila-Hong Kong route.

It said that Cebu Pacific's fleet consisted of 12 narrow-bodied DC-9s, which were first manufactured in 1965 and were phased out in 1982, plus one old-model Boeing 757-200.

PAL said it had been using wide-body Airbus A330-300 aircraft on the Manila-Hong Kong route. These new-generation jets have an average age of four years.

Cebu Pacific, for its part, said it was expecting the delivery of its second Boeing 757 plane tomorrow as part of its thrust to strengthen its international operations.

Dubbed the "City of Manila," the B757 will be used for Cebu Pacific's Seoul-Manila route.

Last December, the first of Cebu Pacific's Boeing 757 aircraft was delivered to Manila. With an original passenger capacity of 200, the said plane was reconfigured by Cebu Pacific to accommodate 179 seats to give passengers more personal space.

PAL said it was serving a totally different customer base from that of Cebu Pacific, consisting of the middle to high range of the market with a strong franchise among business travelers. The airline also has a dominant position in leisure and overseas Filipino workers traffic.

It said that such market segments demanded superior products, including state-of-the-art wide-body jets with business class service, inflight amenities, gourmet meals, dedicated pre-departure lounge, generous frequent-flyer programs, and convenient flight schedules with greater frequencies.

Cebu Pacific, on the other hand, caters to the low-fare end of the market for which the airline's austere, no-frills service is no object, PAL claimed.

"In fact, in the domestic sector, Cebu Pacific competes more closely with the shipping lines than with PAL since its fares are about the same or even lower than those of the inter-island boats," PAL added in the statement.

The situation is such that in 2000, some shipping companies complained to the Department of Transportation and Communications that this pricing practice of Cebu Pacific and other low-fare airlines were siphoning off their passengers and killing their business.

Cebu Pacific launched its regional operations in the Asia-Pacific last November, with twice-daily flights to Hongkong. In addition, the airline began its twice-weekly charter flights between Cebu and Seoul last Feb. 9. Aside from Hong Kong and Seoul, the airline is eyeing possible flights to Singapore and China among other destinations.

US court junks Ever-Gotesco suit vs S&R

A US Federal District Court has dismissed the lawsuit filed in the United States by Ever-Gotesco against S&R Price, saying that the lawsuit was "disingenuous" and that its "legal arguments were contradicted by the record".

S&R Price, in a statement, that Ever-Gotesco's move was an apparent attempt to circumvent the Philippine judicial system which had already stayed the lawsuit in the Philippines and ordered Jose Go's company to go through arbitration in Sydney, Australia.

It said that the US District Court in the southern district of California chastised Ever-Gotesco "for wasting the court's and the parties' limited time and resources" in a case that have already been addressed by a Philippine court.

Ever-Gotesco Resources and Holdings Inc. and its subsidiary PriceSmart Trading Philippines Inc. (collectively referred to as Ever-Gotesco) first filed a lawsuit on June 15, 2001 in Manila against PSMT Philippines Inc. (doing business in Manila as S&R Price Membership Shopping) and its parent company, PriceSmart Inc. (a merchandising company based in the United States).

The complaint alleged that the license granted to Ever-Gotesco by PriceSmart Inc. was wrongfully terminated in 1998. S&R Price disputed that allegation and maintained that the litigation should be entirely stayed or dismissed, in favor of arbitration in Sydney, Australia, which was opposed by Ever-Gotesco.

On Dec. 21, 2001 the Court of Appeals issued a ruling, ordering that all action in the Philippine litigation must cease, pending arbitration in Sydney, Australia.

Asia seen exposed to Enron-style risks

HONG KONG—Enron Corp.'s spectacular collapse may have ignited an uproar in the US over accounting procedures, but off-balance sheet debt, multilayered subsidiaries and stealthy investment losses appear more widespread in Asia.

Experts say it's not the region's accounting rules and standards that are at fault, but the manipulations of those who must comply with them.

"In Asia, you have these family-owned businesses. They structure the company like a pyramid, with a holding company at the top and subsidiaries upon subsidiaries and they use this to hide assets, debt or related party transactions," said T.J. Wong, accounting professor at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Telling all

Many of Asia's listed firms outside of Japan are majority owned or controlled by tycoons who also serve as shareholders, corporate governance advocates say.

Expensive assets owned by the CEO are often sold to the listed firm at inflated prices, and inter company loans and other transactions are common.

Wong says that telling all is not always the best path to riches for these family firms.

"The market discount associated with being opaque is less than what these companies gain by having more control," he said.

In some cases, investors in Asia implicitly trust tycoons in charge of companies even if there is a dearth of information about corporate activities.

Asia's richest businessman, Li Ka-shing, enjoys widespread support because of his shrewd investments and impeccable market timing.

Deciphering the often complicated public accounts of his ports-to-telecom conglomerate Hutchison Whampoa can give reporters headaches, but few investors claim it is too opaque.

They prefer instead to focus on Li's legendary Midas touch, the group's global cash flow and its well run businesses.

Hutchison said in a statement late on Friday that all its liabilities were properly reflected in its consolidated accounts, as were its assets.

In reaction to an item in the Asian Wall Street Journal, which questioned the lack of detail about the HK$106 billion in contingent liabilities mentioned in its annual report, the company said its cash and liquid assets exceeded total consolidated debt.

Don't worry, be happy

When markets are rising, of course, most investors are happy to ignore warning signs that problems may lurk in the books.

Enron's implosion, triggered by off-balance sheet trading partnerships that piled up huge debts, will boost accounting vigilance, said Julian Mayo, managing director at iRegent Financial Services Ltd, which manages a US$200-million fund in Asia.

"I think this is what normally happens at the end of the cycle. These kinds of problems normally emerge as bubbles burst."

But aside from a few dot-com flameouts, Asia has seen relatively few big collapses.

One of the region's largest was the sudden closure of China's Guangdong International Trust and Investment Coup in 1998 as the Asian financial crisis brought property prices crashing down.

Guangdong Enterprises, a GITIC sister company and flagship of the Guangdong provincial government, was riddled with bad debt and investment losses while one of its subsidiaries, Guangnan Holdings was hit by fraud.

Hong Kong's anti corruption agency arrested some 27 people in 2000 and 2001 in connection with fraudulent letters of credit that sought to bilk banks of HK$2 billion. The ICAC also alleged that the firm's profit figures were inflated by hundreds of millions of dollars.

China caution

While the lack of a strong rebound from the Asian financial crisis kept asset values—and risky business plans—in check, Wong says the risk of such accounting problems are particularly high in China.

The biggest concern is problems at the state-owned parent company level, which are often still struggling with the transition from a planned to a market business model. To most inventors, they remain a mystery.

"The parent company is a black box. You don't know anything about the parent company," Wong added.

Consultants advise taking a close look at the parent when investing in a supposedly "clean" listing vehicle. Pitfalls include loans to non-listed sister firms, uncollectible accounts receivable and investment losses.

Many Hong Kong-listed Chinese firms pumped up profits by speculating in stocks and property during the boom years of the 1990s—known in local parlance as "stir-frying their assets." ***Reuters***

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Hint: Check the pages of Sunday Inquirer Magazine on Sunday, February 24 for Inquirer's My Wishbox.

SEC readies measures to prevent Enron-type problems in RP

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission said yesterday that it would issue tighter rules to ensure that companies here would not go the way of Enron Corp.

In a speech before the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants, SEC Chair Lilia Bautista announced that the SEC was thinking of raising the bar for chief financial officers and other officials responsible for submitting the financial reports of listed companies.

Bautista added that the commission was also considering requiring a separate audit review and opinion for transactions worth 10 to 15 percent of the total capital of companies involved in conflict-of-interest cases.

Enron was the United States' biggest energy company when it imploded as a result of off-balance sheet trading partnerships that piled up huge debts.

Enron's spectacular collapse engulfed company executives and Wall Street accountants, raised questions for politicians and regulators in Washington, and cost employees and other shareholders tens of billions of dollars. It also raised concerns over off-balance sheet debts, multilayered subsidiaries and stealthy investment losses in Asia.

The SEC has approved revisions to its so-called special accounting rules and a circular on the accreditation process for external auditors of listed companies.

BAUTISTA

The circular is set to take effect in July. It emphasizes on the independence of external auditors and prevents them from having conflicting relationships with their clients.

The circular specifically requires external auditors to report material findings involving fraud, dishonesty or errors, potential losses or inadequacy of company assets to cover creditors' claims.

The SEC is also preparing a technology-driven, risk-oriented and integrated monitoring device called "I-Mode."

I-Mode is designed to track the extent to which corporations are complying with laws, policies, rules and regulations, including the recently promulgated anti-money laundering law.

For feedback, text us at (0918)917-5026 or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

8 steps to a healthy body and a sound mind

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

LET'S face it. You will have to, sooner or later. There are no shortcuts to achieving a healthy body, and as with any great endeavor, success will require planning and diligence. There are, however, general guidelines, a tablet of commandments, so to speak, that can help you along the path to good health.

So, you want to have a trimmer and more energetic body, right? You want a sound mind, right? Congratulations. You have taken that first bold step—arriving at a decision to do something about it.

While it may take years to develop your ideal body (I confess, mine is still a work in progress), I believe that in three months you will be moderately pleased with the results, assuming you have the discipline and the tenacity.

Healthy body

- You are what you eat. Studies have shown that an eating plan with low consumption levels of animal meat and fat is better for the heart. Add more fish and chicken (without the skin) rather than beef and pork to your diet.
- Drink eight to 10 glasses of clean water daily. Water is essential to maintaining regular body functions. Great for cleansing and detoxification.
- Consume less salt, sugar and fat. The key to healthy living is moderation, so try to hold off on that tempting eclair or that crispy *pata*. The food you reject might just save your life!
- Sleep six to eight hours a day. Natural sleep without the help of tranquilizers is best for the body. If you have trouble sleeping, you may try a cup of chamomile, peppermint or valerian root tea just before bedtime.
- Increase our activity level. Exercise a minimum of three times a week. A brisk, 30-minute early morning or late afternoon walk is great for your circulation. And when at work, take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Take a vitamin-mineral supplement daily. You may consider an extra dose of anti-oxidants like Vitamins A, C, E, selenium and zinc if you are a serious health buff.
- Eat more yellow and green leafy vegetables and fruits daily like squash, romaine lettuce, *malunggay*, spinach, papaya, pineapple. Their high nutrient value has anticancer properties.
- Cut down on your carbohydrate consumption, especially at night. Carbo loading at night raises your insulin levels and may turn into fat the very next day, leaving you feeling bloated.

Natural facelift

Here is a secret recipe from my vanity kitchen, guaranteed to give you a natural facelift:

1 egg yolk (for dry skin)
White of 1 egg (for oily skin)
2 pc cotton eye pads

Beat the eggs lightly until creamy. With clean hands and on a clean face (devoid of makeup or grime), apply the egg mask on your face, avoiding the eye area. Dip the eye pads in iced water. Squeeze dry. Apply on your closed eyelids. Sit back, relax. Leave the mask on your face for 5 minutes or until the egg mask tightens.

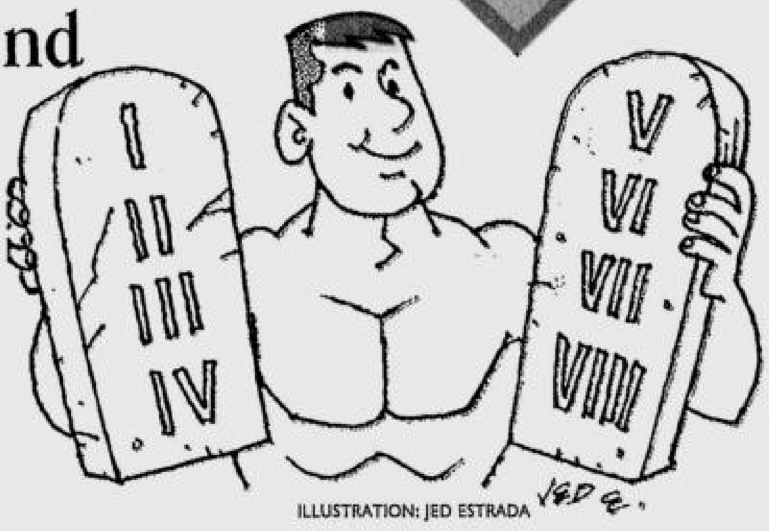
Rinse with cold water. Repeat procedure after one week.

Now feel your skin. Refreshed and taut!

Sound mind

- Practice a positive thought a day. Driving negative thoughts away is like directing traffic. Visu-

8 STEPS/ p.C3



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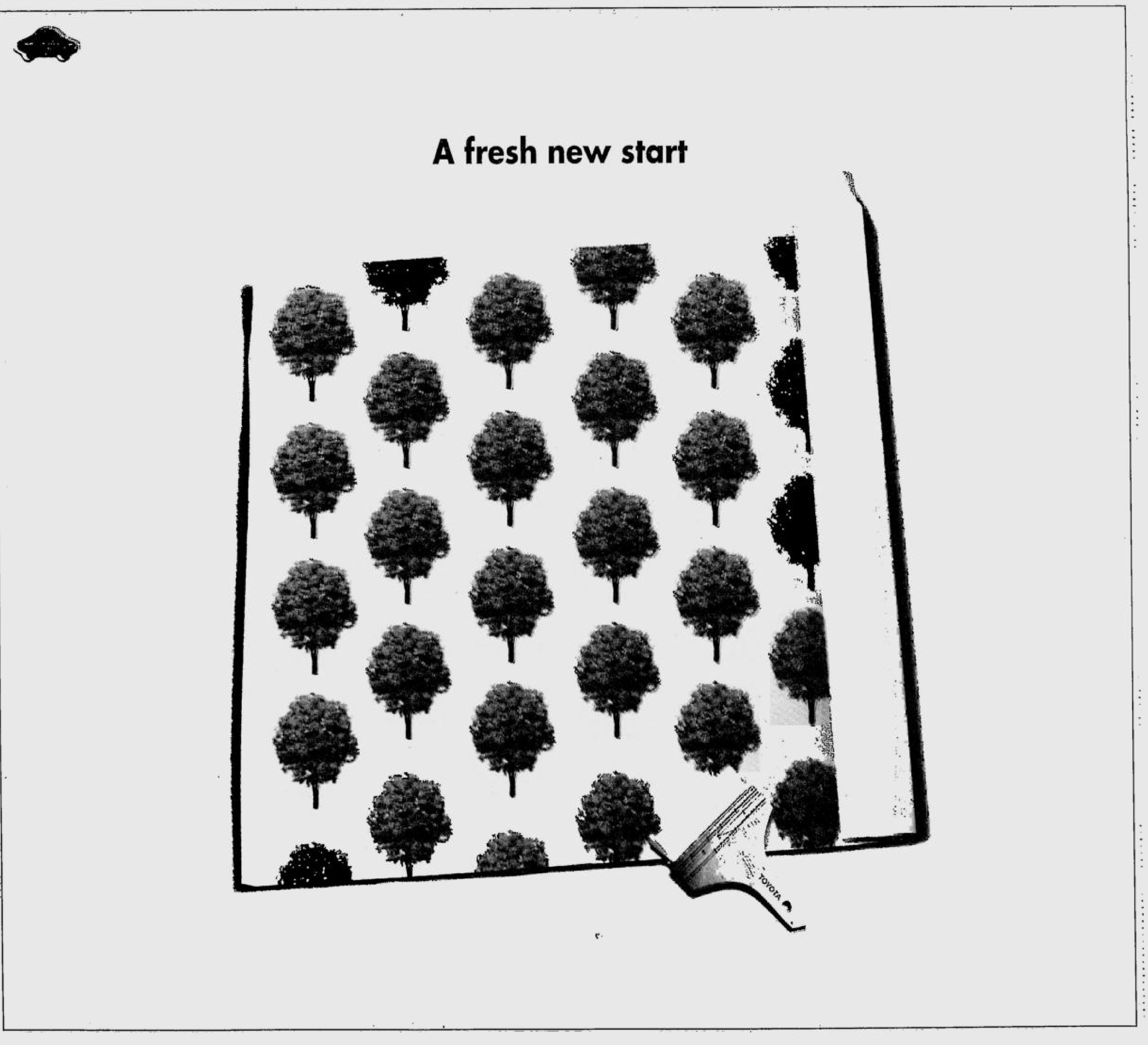
A fresh new start
TOYOTA

F.I.T. stands for Function, Innovation and Technology, which describes a four-fabric layering system designed by Nike, the No. 1 sports and fitness company in the world, to help athletes achieve optimum performance in whatever weather condition. Nike has developed the Dri-F.I.T. microfiber fabric to enable moisture to be transported away from the body to the surface of the fabric for quick drying. The fabric remains lightweight despite being drenched in sweat. Angel Jacob wears a Dri-F.I.T. V-neck tank with a pair of Empress workout pants (left) and Dri-FIT workout shorts with a tank top (right).

Take Charge Doc!

Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA every Tuesday.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

I decided to enroll my dependents a few months after our company chose MEDICard as its healthcare provider. However, I received a letter from your office informing me that their membership was denied due to late enrollment. Why is this so?

The denial is because of MEDICard's deadline for enrollment of dependents. Employees of new and renewing corporate members are given up to 60 days from the effectivity of the policy to endorse the enrollment of their dependents to MEDICard under the corporate healthcare program for their company. For dependents who become eligible for enrollment within the contract period (e.g. newly-born child of a married employee) the principal member is given 30 days from the date the dependent became eligible to be enrolled. Outside of these "*grace periods*", enrollment shall be deemed lapsed and may only be considered on the next contract renewal. For individual and family accounts, dependents must be endorsed for enrollment together with the principal enrollee.

Meet your MEDICard Team

Pediatrician, **Dr. Maximo S. Abuel** has been an accredited medical service provider for over 10 years now. Dr. Abuel finished Medicine at FEU-Dr. Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation and later pursued his residency training for his specialization in Pediatrics at the National Children's Medical Center. Known to his peers and patients simply as Doc Abuel, he has been addressing the medical needs of MEDICard members at Medical Center Muntinlupa. He believes in quality time with his wife, businesswoman Corazon Abuel and their kids Butch Josef and Maria Coralynn and spends most of his free days with them. Dr. Abuel is active in community out-reach projects and various projects of Couples for Christ. Visit Dr. Abuel for your consultation needs. Drop by his clinic at room 337 of Medical Center Muntinlupa on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 8 to 9 in the morning and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 AM to 2 PM and also from Mondays to Saturdays 5 PM to 7 in the evening.

After graduating in Medicine from the University of Sto. Tomas, **Dr. Maria Sheila Fernandez** enrolled in the Pediatric Residency Program of St. Luke's Medical Center and in 1995, earned her degree as a Pediatrician. Doc Sheila is a recent member of our medical service team, addressing the health needs of cardholders at St. Lukes. She is a member to the Philippine Ambulatory Pediatric Association, Philippine Pediatric Society and the Philippine Medical Association. You may visit Dr. Fernandez for your pediatric consultation needs at room 339 of the Medical Arts Building every Mondays. Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 AM to 12 noon and on Saturdays from 1 to 4 in the afternoon.

Dr. Mario Rogelio C. Magnaye is MEDICard's accredited specialist in San Pedro Hospital in Davao City. After finishing his studies in Medicine at the Davao Medical School Foundation, he took residency training for specialization in General Surgery at San Pedro Hospital, graduating in 1999. He is a member of the Philippine Medical Association and the Philippine Society of General Surgery. Today, Doc Mario is married to SM Davao company nurse Lizaflor Magnaye and spends most of his free time with family and friends and his hobby, reading. You may visit Dr. Magnaye at room 204 of the Medical Arts Building of San Pedro Hospital from Mondays to Fridays, 9 AM to 12 noon and then again from 2 to 5 in the afternoon.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com

For individual or family membership inquiries, please call 818-2161 and look for Ms. Joy Mendiola. For group or corporate membership, please call 817-5136, 817-4985 or 817-5127 and look for a membership consultant.

TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. ***Log on to www.medicardphils.com***

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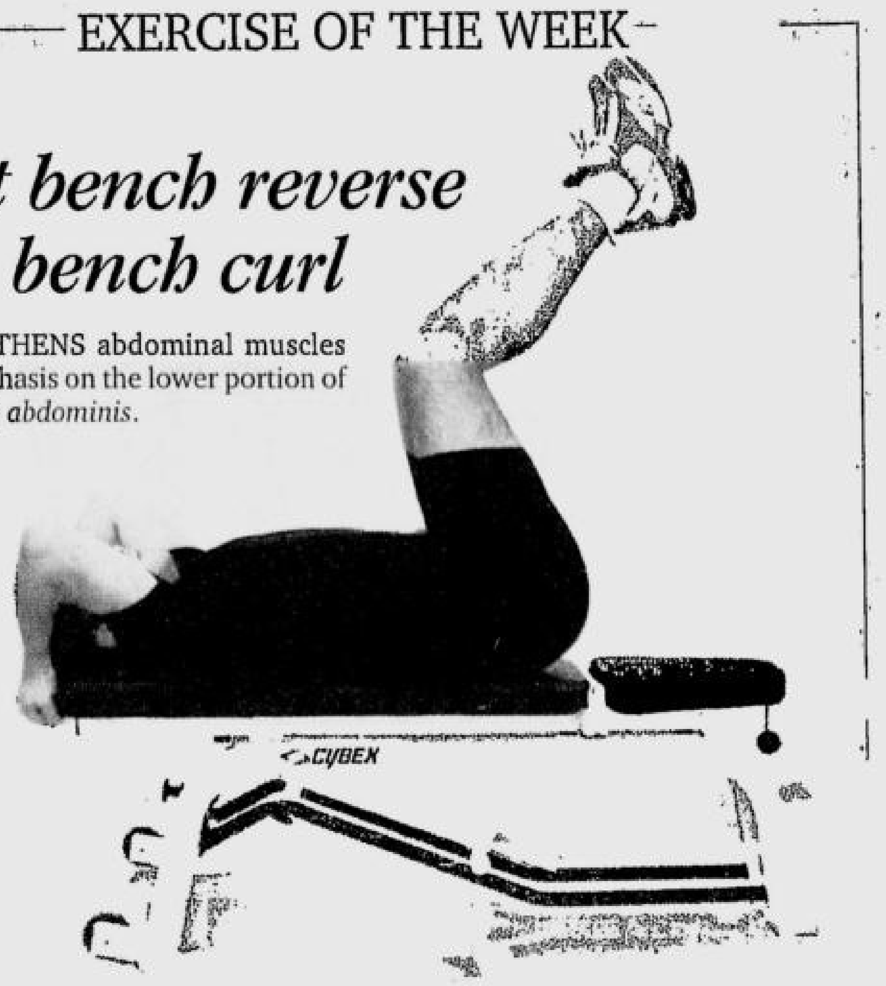
ISO 9002

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Flat bench reverse bench curl

STRENGTHENS abdominal muscles with emphasis on the lower portion of the *rectus abdominis*.



Equipment:
Gym bench

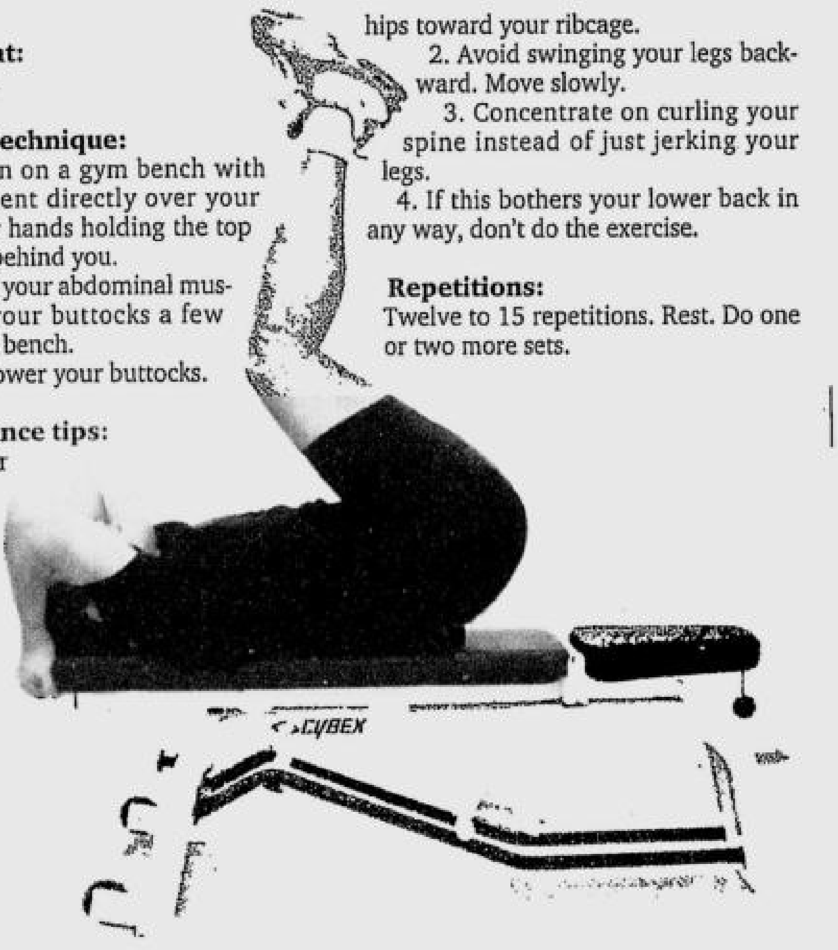
Exercise technique:

1. Lie down on a gym bench with your knees bent directly over your hips and your hands holding the top of the bench behind you.
2. Contract your abdominal muscles to curl your buttocks a few inches off the bench.
3. Slowly lower your buttocks.

Performance tips:

1. Pull your hips toward your ribcage.
2. Avoid swinging your legs backward. Move slowly.
3. Concentrate on curling your spine instead of just jerking your legs.
4. If this bothers your lower back in any way, don't do the exercise.

Repetitions:
Twelve to 15 repetitions. Rest. Do one or two more sets.



How do you want to grow old?

From page C4

ity like tennis and ballroom dancing. Can do most forms of endurance exercises, sports and hobbies. At low risk for falling into the "physically frail" category.

- Physically elite—Exercises on an almost daily basis. Joins sports competitions (Senior Olympics, marathons, etc.), does vigorous activities like squash and high-intensity exercise classes and does high-risk and power activities such as hang gliding and heavy weight lifting. Virtually no risk of falling into the "physically frail" category.

Fitness seminar

THE ASSOCIATION of Fitness Professionals of the Phils. will hold a fitness seminar on Feb. 23 at the PCED University Hostel, UP Diliman campus. Personal training topics are: "All About the Rotator Cuff," "Basics of Exercise Program Design" and "Understanding Your Back." Group exercise topics are "Pilates—The Stott Way," "Latin Aerobics," "Leadership Skills" and "Funky Jabbin' (kickboxing)." For beginner instructors, there will be a two-hour session on "Exercise Physiology." Call 842-0567 for more details.

For questions and past articles or exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.com

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8 steps . . .

From page C1

alize yourself as a traffic cop, allowing positive thoughts to flow through your mind's skyway with ease. Block the road where negative thoughts threaten to cause a bottleneck in your mind. Your affirmation for the day: "I am the traffic cop of my mind, directing only the good and beautiful to and from me all the time"

- Meditate three to five minutes in the morning and the evening. Have some quiet reflection time.
- Listen to soothing music.
- Begin and end your day with a smile.
- Practice relaxed breathing. Pacing your breathing helps control your body functions better.
- Hold your temper. Count to 11 instead of 10 before getting angry.
- Laugh. Studies have shown that laughter releases a chemical in the brain that directly affects your mood from glum to chirpy.
- Unleash the power of touch. Touch a person today in a caring way. You will find that a loving touch can heal anyone and anything.

Embarking on a wellness lifestyle can be as exciting as life itself. You will find that the journey can be just as fulfilling as reaching your destination.

Love and light!

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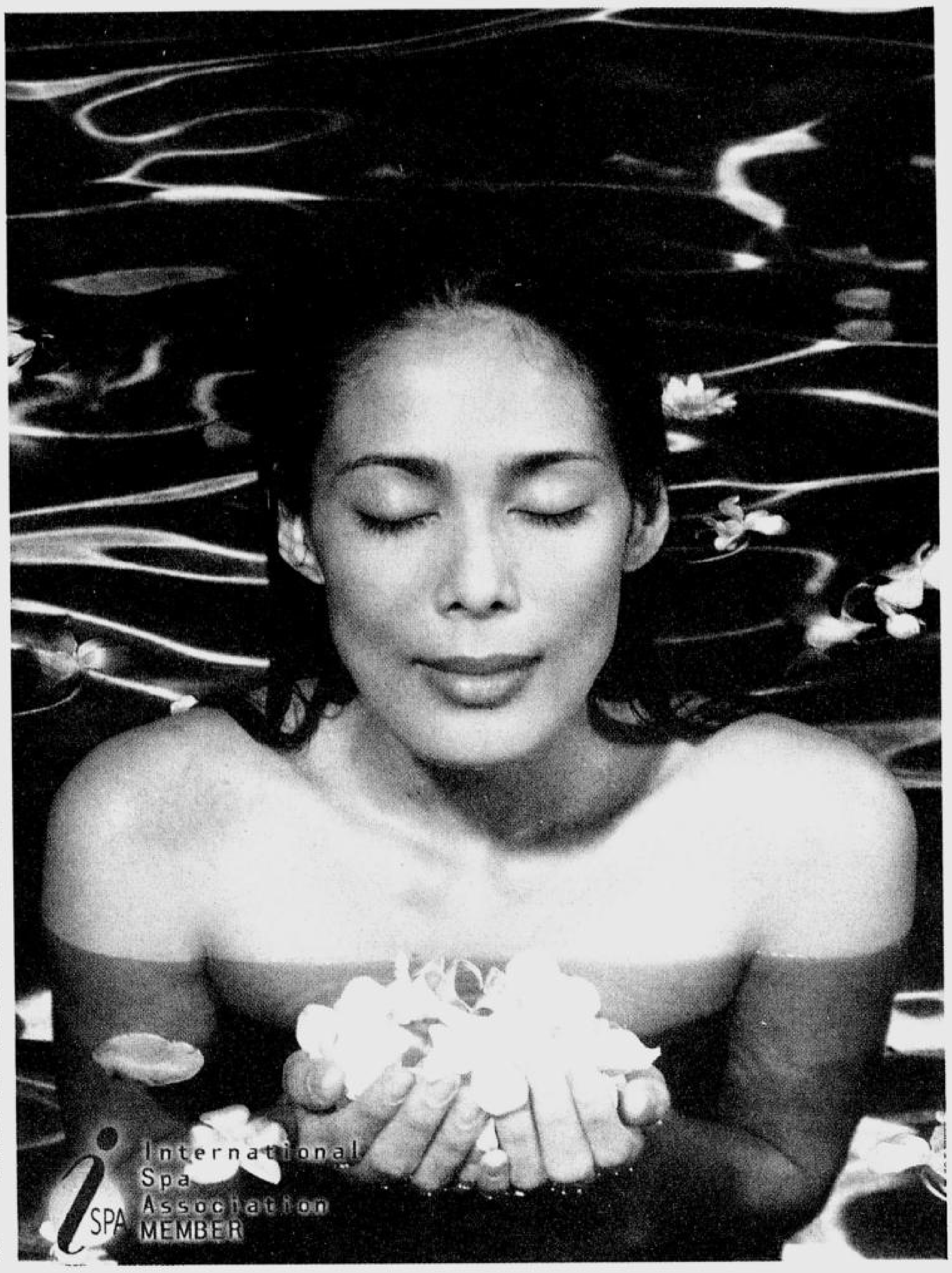

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"Save the Earth, Plant a Tree" isn't just a catchy slogan. It's a reflection of Toyota's heartfelt commitment to environmental conservation.

At Toyota, we share your concern for the environment. We are trying to do our part by designing more eco-friendly cars, introducing cleaner, greener production methods, and voluntarily participating in reforestation projects. Many of our customers here in the Philippines are already familiar with the Toyota "Save the Earth, Plant a Tree" campaign, but that is just part of the story. In fact, we have been cooperating on an urban forestry and greening program with the Institute of Natural Resources at the University of the Philippines at Los Baños since 1999. We planted over 16,000 trees at the Toyota Santa Rosa (Laguna) Industrial Complex, and established a nursery where forestry students can conduct fieldwork on the screening and selection of appropriate species for future reforestation projects. It may be just a small start, but it is a fresh new start that is helping the young generation to make a big contribution to our planet's future.

TOYOTA

How do you want to grow old?

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Aboitiz Juan

A FEW weeks ago, I volunteered to bring the father of a friend to the doctor. He is a gentleman in his early 70s who looks like he is a decade younger. He attributes his youthful looks to his healthy lifestyle—no drinking, no smoking and a vegetarian diet. So why did he need to see a doctor? Because in the last two years, his family and friends had noticed he was considerably slower and less agile. He had difficulty getting in and out of a car, could not put on his own socks, could not pick up things that fell to the floor and walked much slower.

How did this supposedly healthy man get to be this way? Two simple reasons—he was overweight (his vegetarian diet included ample portions of sweets and dessert) and he did not exercise. The doctor told him his muscles had become stiff, weak and inflexible. Exercises to strengthen and stretch his body would reverse the deterioration in muscle tone and flexibility. Otherwise, he would have to start using a wheelchair in the not-so-distant future.

> Much of what we consider as natural and inevitable part of aging (loss of strength, stamina and energy) actually results from lack of physical activity

Luckily, my friend was well-informed on health and fitness. She did not accept her dad's condition as an inevitable part of growing old. She is now arranging for a physical therapist to work with him regularly. If he commits to exercising regularly, he will once again be able to get in and out of a car without difficulty, put on his own socks and pick up anything that falls. He also will not need the wheelchair.

Use it or lose it

When I brought my friend's father to the doctor, my mother-in-law hitched a ride with me as she was going to a building near the doctor's office. My mother-in-law is also in her early 70s and follows a healthy lifestyle.

The difference between the two old people is that she has been exercising regularly for the last 15 years. She does aerobics (kickboxing, step, low impact—you name it, she does it) and lifts weights regularly. Her energy is amazing. She walks faster than much younger people do. A couple of years ago, on a trip to New York, I wanted to take a cab because it was drizzling. She preferred to walk. The little rain or the 15 blocks to our destination did not bother her one bit.

ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

The difference in strength and flexibility between my friend's father and my mother-in-law is a good example of the fitness principle of "use it or lose it." If you exercise, you will be able to keep much of the energy and stamina of your youth. If you don't, you will deteriorate physically prematurely. Much of what we consider as natural and inevitable part of aging (loss of strength, stamina and energy) actually results from lack of physical activity. Of course, even if you exercise and eat properly, you will still age. But at least you will grow old the right way.

Downward spiral

In her lecture in the 2000 AsiaFit Convention in Hong Kong, physical therapist Patricia Galen gave a good explanation of what happened when the elderly didn't exercise. She called it the downward spiral. It began when people avoided doing what was hard for them.

For example, if walking made them tired, they avoided situations involving walking for relatively long periods, such as going shopping or going to parks. They spent more time sitting down. The more they didn't use their legs, the weaker and stiffer the muscles became, and the more unsteady and unbalanced they became, the more they avoided walking. Soon they would spend most of the day seated or lying down until one day they could lose their balance and fall just walking from their bed to the bathroom.

The bones of old people do not heal well so a fall can lead to immobility and all kinds of complications like depression, poor circulation, pneumonia, etc. Complications can result in premature death.

New trend in elderly care

Galen noted that Asians had a lot of respect for older members of their family. Unfortunately, that love and concern could lead to a misguided effort trying to make the elderly more comfortable by accepting their physical weakness instead of encouraging them to become stronger. For example, if *lolo* or *lola* cannot reach down to put on his/her socks or shoes, family members would immediately come to the rescue or make them wear slippers instead. Galen said the more appropriate response was to give them exercises to give them the flexibility to reach their feet.

Continuously changing the environment or lifestyle to adapt to the elderly's weakness will only make them weaker. The new trend in care for the elderly, Galen said, was to train them to become strong and flexible enough to be able to do daily activities with ease.

Right and wrong attitude

Your attitude toward aging and exercise will help you age gracefully or become a premature invalid. Such views as: "There is nothing I can do about it. I am just getting older," "Everyone gets weak when they get older," "I cannot exercise because I am old" and "Exercise is only for the young" are wrong.

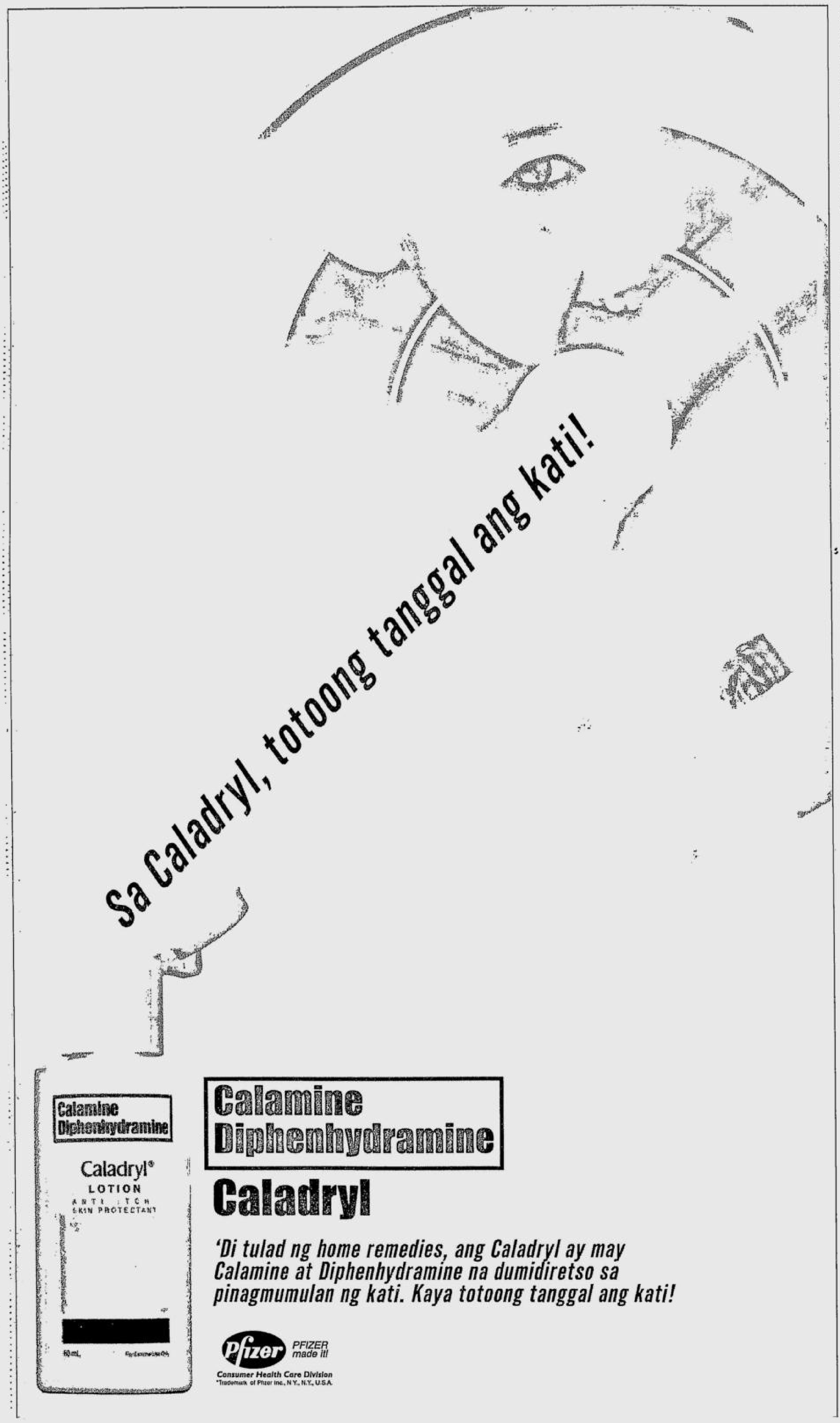
What is right is to believe: "I am only as old as I feel," "If I use it, I won't lose it," "The older I am, the more I need to exercise." The best motto I ever heard from an old person is: "I will only stop exercising when I am dead."

How do you want to grow old?

When it comes to fitness, there are different categories of old people. What kind of "old" you want to be depends largely on you since many of the medical conditions of the elderly (diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, osteoporosis) are influenced by lifestyle. Look at the categories listed by Idea Personal Training Magazine. One of them could be your future.

- Totally disabled—Cannot stand or walk. Has to rely on professional staff or family for all activities of daily living.
- Physically dependent—Often chair- or wheelchair-bound or confined to the bed. Needs help for some or most activities of daily living. Home or institution bound.
- Physically frail—Performs activities that are only very slightly physically demanding. Spends most of the day sitting. Can perform most but not all activities of daily living. May be homebound.
- Physically independent—Fairly active. Does light physical work or hobbies like gardening, walking, golf. Can perform all activities of daily living without any help. Usually without chronic disease but has low fitness and health reserves. A brief injury or illness can mean falling into the "physically frail" category.
- Physically fit—Exercises at least twice a week. Does moderate to high-intensity activ-

HOW/ p.C2



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Diphenhydramine

Caladryl

'Di tulad ng home remedies, ang Caladryl ay may Calamine at Diphenhydramine na dumidiretso sa pinagmumulan ng kati. Kaya totoong tanggal ang kati!

Pfizer PFIZER made it!

Consumer Health Care Division

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